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MEMOIRS

OF

SIR THOMAS MORE,

&c.

VOL. I.

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MEMOIRS

OF

SIR THOMAS MORE,

WITH

A NEW TRANSLATION OF HIS UTOPIA,

HIS

HISTORY OF KING RICHARD III,

AND

HIS LATIN POEMS.

By ARTHUR CAYLEY, the Younger, Esq.

Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,
Like rigid Cincinnatus nobly poor,
A dauntless soul, erect, who smil'd on death. THOMSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Vol. I.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY CADELL AND DAVIS, STRAND.

1808.

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If examples of the most rigid integrity, with the sacrifice of life itself in the cause of supposed truth, deserve the attention of mankind, few characters on record can have a higher claim to this attention than our celebrated countryman Sir Thomas More.

Our most authentic sources of information respecting him are, his Life written by William Roper, Esq. who married his favourite daughter Margaret; that written by Thomas More, Esq. his great-grandson; and a letter or two by Erasmus relative to his friend's domestic history. The other extant accounts of Sir Thomas are little else than copies from one or other of these, and throw no new light on his history.

Mr. Roper, naturally the more likely of the two biographers to be well-informed upon the subject, hath been accused of allowing his affection to prevail in some measure over his judgment on this occasion, and of writing a panegyric rather than a history. Habits of long intimacy with a character of great domestic worth, it is true, attach us to it in a degree of enthusiasm, and one so long enjoying the intimacy and esteem of such a character as the knight, had, we must allow, peculiar difficulties to encounter in this way, when he afterward became his biographer. As to his qualification in point of information, however, we may allow his own words to be unanswerable,—*knowing his doings and mind no man living so well, by reason I was con-*

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tinually resident in his house by the space of sixteen years and more. And for the respectability of his character, though tombstones too often exaggerate, let his epitaph, as preserved by Mr. Somner, be allowed to speak.

Hic jacet
Venerabilis vir Gulielmus Roper armiger,
Filius et hæres quondam Johannis Roperi armigeri;
Et Margareta,
Uxor ejusdem Gulielmi,
Filia quondam Thomæ Mori militis
Summi olim Angliæ cancellarii;
Græcis Latinisque literis doctissima.
Qui quidem Gulielmus patri suo in officio
Prothonotariatus supremæ curiæ banci
Regii successit; in quo cum annis LIV
Fideliter ministrasset, idem officium
Filio suo primogenito Thomæ reliquit.
Fuit is Gulielmus domi forisque munificens,
Mitis, misericors; incarceratorum,
Oppressorum et pauperum baculus.
Genuit ex Margareta uxore, quam unicam
Habuit, filios duos et filias tres; ex iis
Vidit in vita sua nepotes et pronepotes.
Uxorem in virili ætate amisit; viduatus uxore,
Castissime vixit annis XXXIII.
Tandem completis in pace diebus, decessit
In senectute bona ab omnibus desideratus
Die IV mensis Jan. ann. Chr. Salv. M.DLXXVII
Ætatis vero suæ LXXXII.

Mr. More, whose account of the knight is fuller than that of his predecessor, may be presumed from his direct

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relationship, to have made his additions with authenticity. He is said to have been a person of respectability, and to have been employed by the English clergy as their agent in Spain and at the court of Rome. On his death, the English Roman catholic clergy erected a monument to his memory, as a testimony of their respect and the sense they had of his services. A celebrated protestant divine of our country pronounces him, however, *a narrow-minded zealot and a very fanatic;* while Anthony Wood says of his Life of Sir Thomas, that it is *incomparably well written*, a judgment to be expected from Wood—*similes habent labra lactucas.* His bigotted attachment to the religion of his celebrated ancestor is indeed too apparent in his work; and his biographical follower hath moreover frequent cause to regret his neglect of chronological order, he having pretty implicitly followed the indifferent arrangement of Stapleton. We will add his epitaph as preserved by Wood.

D. O. M. S.
Thomæ Moro dioc. ebor. anglo
Magni illius Thomæ Mori Angliæ cancellarii
Et martyris pronepoti atque hæredi;
Viro probitate et pietate insigni;
Qui, raro admodum apud Britannos exemplo,
In fratrem natu minorem amplum transcripsit
Patrimonium, et presbyter Romæ factus,
Inde jussu sedis apostolicæ in patriam
Projectus, plusculos annos strenuam fidei
Propagandæ navavit operam.
Postea cleri anglicani negotia VII annos Romæ
Et in Hispania P. P. Paulo V et Gregorio XV

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Summa integritate et industria
Suisque sumptibus procuravit.
Tandem de subrogando anglis episcopo
Ad Urban. VIII missus, negotio eo feliciter
Confecto, laborum mercedem recepturus,
Ex hac vita migravit
XI Apr; Ann: M.DCXXV
Ætatis suæ LIX.
Clerus anglicanus mæstus P.

The modern biographer of Sir Thomas More, as all of his intermediate biographers have done, must rely on these two writers as his safest guides. We shall find their accounts to admit of considerable amplification as we proceed; and should either of our conductors occasionally make what appears to us *a false step*, we must endeavour to use what circumspection we can at this distant period in avoiding his error.

Respecting the knight's early ancestry, both of our guides have left us ill informed. From the great-grandson, however, we learn that Sir John More, knight, the father of Sir Thomas, *bare arms from his birth, having his coat quartered.* By reason of Henry VIII.'s seizure of their evidences, he adds, the family could not make out their ancestry; but *he had heard* that they proceeded from the Mores of Ireland, or the latter from them. Sir Thomas himself informs us in his epitaph, that he sprang from *no noble family but of an honest stock.*

Sir John More appears to have been born about the year

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1440.* He is said to have been a lawyer of distinguished talents and integrity, and was one of the justices of the King's Bench in the reign of Henry VIII.† He is described by Sir Thomas in the epitaph already alluded to, *homo civilis, suavis, innocens, mitis, misericors, equus et integer; annis quidem gravis, sed corpore plusquam pro ætate vivido.* He lived to a great age, and had the singular fortune of seeing his son Chancellor of England, as will appear by an anecdote hereafter to be related.

Camden, in his Remains, relates a bon-mot of Sir John which will not preposses the fair sex in his favour. He compared a man choosing a wife, to one who dipped his hand into a bag which contained twenty snakes and one eel—*it was twenty to one that he caught the eel.*

After this, we are surprised at finding that the old gentleman had the resolution to take *three dips* himself; for we learn that he was thrice married.

The maiden name of his first wife, the mother of Sir Thomas, was ——— Handcombe, of Holywell in Bedfordshire. The age of portents was not yet gone by; and Dr. Clement, a famous physician of the time, and the intimate friend of More, reported of her, that, on the night after her marriage, she saw, in a dream, engraven on her wedding ring, the number and characters of her children, *the face of one shining with superior brightness.* She had Jane, mar-

* Erasmus to Budæus. † More.

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ried to Richard Stafferton, Esq. whom Mr. More calls a noble gentleman; Elizabeth, wife of John Rastell, Esq. the father of Judge Rastell; and Thomas, the celebrated subject of these memoirs. Of Sir John's other wives we only know, that the christian name of the last was Alice. She lived on her jointure in Hertfordshire, at a messuage then called Moreplace, but since Gubbons, in the parish of Northmimes, and outlived her son-in-law. Being deprived of her possessions in Henry's fury, a little before her death, she died at Northal, about a mile distant, and was buried in that church.*

Thomas, the only son of Sir John More, was born at his father's usual residence in Milk-street, London, in 1480, 1480.
the twentieth year of the reign of our fourth Edward. Another presage of the child's future eminence, *related by his nurse*, is, that one day as she was riding with him in her arms over a piece of water, the horse slipt by accident into a deep and dangerous hole. To give the infant, a chance for his life, she threw him over a hedge into a field, and having afterward, with much difficulty, made her own escape, she found him, to her no small surprise, not only unhurt, but sweetly smiling upon her. †

The school of S^{t}. Anthony in the parish of Bennet-fink, in Threadneedle-street, belonging to an hospital of the same name, which had been in high reputation since the time of Henry VI, and, beside other eminent persons, numbereth

* More. † More.

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archbishops Heath and Whitgift among its scholars, afforded More likewise the rudiments of his education.* Here a learned man named Nicholas Holt was his master, under whom, to use Mr. More's expression, he rather *greedily devoured* than *leisurely chewed* his grammar rules, and far surpassed all his schoolfellows in understanding and diligence.

By the interest of his father, More afterward became an inmate of the house of Cardinal Morton,† of whom he hath transmitted us a high character, as well in his Utopia as in his History of Richard III. His authority in the state, saith More, was not more weighty than were his wisdom and virtue; his eloquence was polished and convincing, his skill great as a lawyer, his understanding incomparable, his memory very extraordinary. The king and state relied upon his counsel, for it was his policy which placed the crown of the usurper Richard upon the head of Henry, and united the houses of York and Lancaster. Henry VIII made him archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of England, to which the pope added the honour of cardinal.

Mr. Roper informs us, that while More was in the cardinal's house, *though he were young of years, yet would he at Christmas suddenly sometimes step-in among the players, and, never studying for the matter, make a part of his own there presently among them, which made the lookers-on more sport than all the players beside.* The cardinal, he adds, took great delight in his wit and towardness, and would

* Roper and Newcourt. † Utopia and Roper.

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often say of More to the nobility who happened to be dining with him, *this child, here waiting at the table, whosoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man.*

The following curious specimen of More's early wit and reflection, is extracted from his English works.

'Sr. Thomas More in his youth devised in his father's house in London, a goodly hanging of fine painted cloth with nine pageants and verses over every one of those pageants, which verses expressed and declared what the images in those pageants represented. And also in those pageants were painted the things that the verses over them did in effect declare. Which verses here follow.

In the first pageant was painted a boy playing at the top and scourge, and over this pageant was written as followeth.

CHILDHOOD.

I am called Childhood, in play is all my mind
To cast a quoit, a cokstele and a ball,
A top can I set and drive it in his kind;
But would to God these hateful bookes all
Were in a fire burnt to powder small;
Then might I lead my life always in play,
Which life God send me to mine ending day!

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In the second pageant was painted a goodly fresh young man, riding upon a goodly horse, having a hawk on his fist and a brace of greyhounds following him. And under the horse's feet was painted the same boy that in the first pageant was playing at the top and scourge. And over this second pageant the writing was this.

MANHOOD.

Manhood I am, therefore I me delight
To hunt and hawk, to nourish-up and feed,
The greyhound to the course, the hawk to the flight,
And to bestride a good and lusty steed——
These things become a very man indeed.
Yet thinketh this boy his peevish game sweeter,
But what, no force, his reason is no better.

In the third pageant was painted the goodly young man (in the second pageant) lying on the ground. And upon him stood Lady Venus, goddess of love, and by her upon this man stood the little God Cupid. And over this third pageant this was the writing that followeth.

VENUS AND CUPID.

Whoso na knoweth the strength, power, and might
Of Venus and me her little son Cupid;
Thou Manhood shalt a mirrour be aright
By us subdued for all thy great pride,
My fiery dart pierceth thy tender side.
Now thou who erst dispisedst children small
Shall wax a child again and be my thrall.

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In the fourth pageant was painted an old sage father, sitting in a chair. And lying under his feet was painted the image of Venus and Cupid that were in the third pageant. And over this fourth pageant the scripture was this.

AGE.

Old age am I, with lockes thin and hoar,
Of our short life the last and best part,
Wise and discreet; the public weal therefore
I help to rule, to my labour and smart.
Therefore Cupid withdraw thy fiery dart.
Chargeable matters shall of love oppress
Thy childish game and idle business.

In the fifth pageant was painted an image of Death, and under his feet lay the old man in the fourth pageant. And, above this fifth pageant, this was the saying.

DEATH.

Though I be foul, ugly, lean, and mishape,
Yet there is none in all this world wide,
That may my power withstand or escape;
Therefore sage father, greatly magnified,
Descend from your chair, set apart your pride,
Vouchsafe to lend, tho' it be to your pain,
To me, a fool, some of your wise brain.

In the sixth pageant was painted Lady Fame, and under her feet was the picture of Death that was in the fifth.

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pageant. And over this sixth pageant the writing was as followeth.

FAME.

Fame I am called, marvel you nothing,
Though with tongues am compassed all round,
For in voice of people is my chief living,
O cruel Death, thy power I confound.
When thou a noble man hast brought to ground,
Maugre thy teeth, to live cause him shall I
Of people in perpetual memory.

In the seventh pageant was painted the image of Time, and under his feet was lying the picture of Fame that was in the sixth pageant. And this was the scripture over this seventh pageant.

TIME.

I whom thou sees with horologe in hand,
Am named Time, the lord of every hour,
I shall in space destroy both sea and land.
O simple Fame, how darest thou man honour,
Promising of his name an endless flower;
Who may in the world have a name eternal
When I shall in process destroy the world and all.

In the eighth pageant was pictured the image of Lady Eternity, sitting in a chair, under a sumptuous cloth of state, crowned with an imperial crown. And under her

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feet lay the picture of Time, that was in the seventh pageant, and above this eighth pageant was it written as followeth.

ETERNITY.

He needeth not to boast, I am Eternity,
The very name signifieth well,
And mine empire infinite shall be.
Thou, mortal Time, every man can tell,
Art nothing else but the mobility
Of sun and moon, changing in every degree;
When they shall leave their course, thou shalt be brought,
For all thy pride and boasting, into nought.

In the ninth pageant was painted a poet sitting in a chair; and over this pageant were there written, these verses in Latin following.

THE POET.

Has fictas quemcunque juvat spectare figuras;
Sed mira veros qui putat arte homines,
Ille potest veris animum sic pascere rebus,
Ut pictis oculos pascit imaginibus.
Namque videbit uti fragilis bona lubrica mundi,
Tam cito non veniunt, quam cito pretereunt:
Gaudia, laus et honor, celeri pede omnia cedunt,
Quid manet excepto semper amore Dei?
Ergo homines, levibus jam jam diffidite rebus,
Nulla recessuro spes adhibenda bono.
Qui dabit æternam nobis pro munere vitam
In permansuro ponite vota Deo.'

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About the age of seventeen, Cardinal Morton committed his charge to the university of Oxford; according to Wood to St. Maryhall, but other writers agree to Canterbury (subsequently Christchurch) college. Mr. Hearn was of opinion that he had a chamber at St. Maryhall and studied there, but that he belonged to Christchurch.* He remained two years at the university, and profited exceedingly, saith Mr. Roper, in rhetoric, logic, and philosophy; proving, addeth the great-grandson, what wonders wit and diligence can accomplish, when united, as they seldom are, in one painful student.

That auspicious event in More's history, his intimacy with the good and learned Erasmus, probably had its origin
1497. about this time; the great scholar being at Oxford in 1497.† It was probably by his advice and that of other learned friends, assisted by his own taste, that More was led not to neglect the Greek language in his classical education, for it was not commonly studied then in our country. He acquired it, we are told,‡ under the auspices of William Grocyn, at that time professor or public teacher of Greek at Oxford, and Thomas Linacer the celebrated physician; and he continued to be a warm friend to the cultivation of that noble language, as we shall find by his letter on the subject to the university of Oxford.

Wolsey also, was at this time bursar of Magdalen college, and, as well as Colet and Pace, probably enjoyed the

* Edit. Roper. † Jortin. ‡ Erasmus, ep. 511.

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intimacy of More and Erasmus. He was as yet too young and humble to have materially manifested the character of *the cardinal;* and it is probable that More in early life conceived too favourable an opinion of Wolsey, which we know that his friend Erasmus certainly had done.

At the age of eighteen More is said to have written some of his epigrams, and to have continued to utter, in the manner we have already seen, many reflections on the vanity of this life, not commonly made at his age. By way of exercise he translated the Tyrannicida of Lucian into Latin, which he called his *first fruit* of the Greek language. He also wrote a declamation in answer to this piece, with such force of argument, saith his partial great-grandson, that it seemeth not to give place to Lucian either in invention or eloquence. 1498.

From the university, which, according to the same writer, he must have quitted in 1499, he removed to New-inn to study law; where, saith Roper, *he very well prospered for his time*, and was soon afterward admitted of Lincoln's-inn. At this age his father allowed him so little money that he could not dress with decency, and exacted from him a most particular account of his expences. Yet this conduct was applauded by More in his riper years, as having preserved him from idleness, gaming, bad company, and vice in general. 1499.

Having been reader at Furnival's-inn, by Roper's ac-

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count, above three years, More must have obtained that
1500. situation about 1500. For some time he also read a public lecture on S^t. Austin de civitate Dei, in the church of S^t. Lawrence in the Old Jewry; *whereunto there resorted*, saith his son-in-law, *Dr. Grocyn an excellent cunning man, and all the chief learned of the city of London.* We also learn from Erasmus that More had a numerous auditory at this lecture, and that neither priests nor old men were ashamed or repented of having derived sacred wisdom from the young layman.*

1503. The death of Elizabeth, queen to Henry VII, in 1503, afforded More another occasion for the exercise of his juvenile muse. The following curious specimen of the poetry and language of that age, is extracted from his English works.

'*A rueful Lamentation* written by Mr. Thomas More in his youth, of the death of queen Elizabeth, mother to king Henry VIII, wife to king Henry VII, and eldest daughter to king Edward IV; which queen Elizabeth died in childbed, in February in the year of our Lord 1503, and in the 18^th year of the reign of king Henry VII.

* Epist. to Hutten.

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O! ye that put your trust and confidence
In worldly joy and frail prosperity,
That so live here as ye should never hence,
Remember death and look here upon me;
Ensample I think there may no better be.
Yourself wot well that in this realm was I
Your queen but late, and lo now here I lie

Was I not born of old worthy lineage,
Was not my mother queen, my father king,
Was I not a king's fare in marriage,
Had I not plenty of every pleasant thing?
Merciful God, this is a strange reckoning;
Riches, honour, wealth, and ancestry,
Hath me forsaken, and lo now here I lie.

If worship might have kept me, I had not gone,
If wit might have me saved, I needed not fear,
If money might have holpe, I lacked none,
But O! good God, what vaileth all this gear?
When Death is come thy mighty messenger,
Obey we must, there is no remedy,
Me hath he summoned, and lo now here I lie.

Yet was I late promised otherwise,
This year to live in wealth and delice;
Lo whereto cometh thy blandishing promise,
O! false astrology and devinatrice,
Of God's secrets making thyself so wise;
How true is for this year thy prophecy,
The year yet lasteth, and lo now here I lie.

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O brittle wealth, aye full of bitterness,
Thy single pleasure doubled is with pain;
Account my sorrow first and my distress
In sundrywise, and reckon thereagain
The joy that I have had, and I dare sayne,
For all my honour, endured yet have I
More woe than wealth, and lo now here I lie.

Where are our castles now, where are our towers?
Goodly Richmond soon art thou gone from me;
At Westminster, that costly work of yours,
Mine own dear lord, now shall I never see.
Almighty God vouchsafe to grant that ye
For you and your children well may edify!
My palace builded is, and lo now here I lie.

Adieu mine own dear spouse, my worthy lord,
The faithful love that did us both combine,
In marriage and peaceable concord
Into your handes here I clean resign,
To be bestowed upon your children and mine.
Erst were you father, and now must you supply
The mother's part also, for lo now here I lie.

Farewell my daughter, Lady Margaret,
God wot full oft it grieved hath my mind,
That you should go where we should seldom meet,
Now am I gone and have left you behind.
O mortal folk that we be, very blind!
That we least fear, full oft it is most nigh,
From you depart I first, and lo now here I lie.

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Farewell Madam, my lord's worthy mother,
Comfort your son and be you of good cheer,
Take all a worth, for it will be none other.
Farewell my daughter Catharine, late the fare
To prince Arthur, mine own child so dear.
It booteth not for me to weep or cry,
Pray for my soul, for lo now here I lie.

Adieu Lord Henry, my loving son adieu,
Our Lord increase your honour and estate.
Adieu my daughter Mary, bright of hue,
God make you virtuous, wise and fortunate.
Adieu sweet heart, my little daughter Kate,
Thou shalt, sweet babe, such is thy destiny,
Thy mother never know, for lo now here I lie.

Lady Cicyly, Anne, and Catharine,
Farewell my well-beloved sisters three.
O! Lady Bridget, other sister mine,
Lo here the end of worldly vanity!
Now well are ye that earthly folly flee,
And heavenly thinges love and magnify.
Farewell and pray for me, for lo now here I lie.

Adieu my lords, adieu my ladies all,
Adieu my faithful servants every chone,
Adieu my commons, whom I never shall
See in this world; wherefore to the alone
Immortal God, verily three and one,
I me commend; thy infinite mercy
Shew to thy servant, for lo now here I lie.'

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The religion which then reigned in our country had already made a very powerful impression on the mind of More, and he discovered about his present age of twenty-three, some inclination for the monastic state. He lived four years near the Charter-house, and without a vow frequented daily the spiritual exercises of the Carthusians. Once he inclined to become a Franciscan friar, and is said to have been deterred from his purpose only by observing that the *strictness* formerly prevalent in this country had been considerably abated. After this he had an intention of becoming a priest in association with his faithful companion William Lilly; but God, exclaims his great-grandson, had allotted him to another estate—not to live in solitude, but to be a pattern to the married in bringing-up their children, in loving their wives, and devoting every endeavour to the good of their country; yet excelling withal in piety, charity, humility, obedience, and chastity.

1506. In 1506, Erasmus was in England and dedicated the Tyrannicida of Lucian, as well as a declamation of his own in answer to it, to Richard Whitford, chaplain to bishop Fox. The high opinion he had already formed of More, whose declamation on the same subject hath been before noticed, we find thus strongly expressed in that dedication. —*Latine declamare cœpi, idque impulsore Thoma Moro, cujus uti scis tanta est facundia, ut nihil non possit persuadere vel hosti; tanta autem hominem caritate complector, ut etiam si saltare me, restimque ductare jubeat, sim non gravatim ob-*

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temperaturus.—Neque enim arbitror, nisi me vehemens in illum fallit amor, unquam naturam finxisse ingenium hoc uno præsentius, promptius, oculatius, argutius, breviterque dotibus omnigenis absolutius. Accedit lingua ingenio par, tum morum mira festivitas, salis plurimum sed candidi duntaxat, ut nihil in eo desideres quod ad absolutum pertineat patronum.

From the same great scholar we learn that More could not shake-off his inclination for marriage, and he therefore preferred being a chaste husband to an impure priest.* He held in view at this time, it is said, as a pattern of life, the virtuous and learned Johannes Picus of Mirandula, whose life, letters, and precepts he translated into English, and published them.† For his *ghostly-father*, adds his great-grandson, he chose Colet, Dean of St. Pauls; whose celebrated foundation of St. Paul's school More compares in one of his letters to the horse of Troy, from which many issued to subvert and overthrow ignorance and barbarity.

Stapleton hath preserved a letter from More to Colet, which confirms the respect in which he held the dean, and is a good picture of the state of his own mind at this time. It is here translated.

THOMAS MORE TO DEAN COLET.

'As I was walking lately in Westminster-hall, and musing upon other people's affairs, I encountered your boy. When I first saw him I rejoiced, for he was alway a favourite of.

* Epist. to Hutten. † Eng. Works.

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mine, but more especially because I thought he could not be here without you. But when I learnt from him that you were not returned, and would be absent for a long time, I cannot express to you from what joy into what sadness I was cast.

'For what can be more grievous to me than to be deprived of your sweet intercourse, whose most wise advice I was accustomed to enjoy, with whose most delightful familiarity to be recreated, by whose impressive discourses I have been roused to goodness, by whose life and example I have been amended, lastly, in whose very countenance and approbation I have found contentment. Having under such auspices once felt strength and confidence, deprived of them I naturally feel as it were in the wide world and unsupported. And as lately, treading in your footsteps, I had escaped almost from the jaws of hell, now again like Euridice, but by a contrary law (she, because Orpheus looked back upon her, I, because you look not back upon me), I relapse, I know not by what impulse or necessity, into my former obscurity.

'For what is there in this town to incite any one to a good life? Or rather, what is there which doth not, by a thousand devices and allurements, draw him from the arduous path of virtue, would his disposition guide him never so well in it? Wherever you go what do you hear but, in one place, the hum of feigned attachment or the honied poison of flattery, in another, fierce hatreds, quarrels, strife, and

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litigation? Wherever you cast your eyes, what can you see but victualling-houses, fishmongers, butchers, cooks, puddingmakers, fishers or fowlers, who administer to the belly, the world, and its prince the devil. The very houses seize a good part of our light and suffer us not to behold the sky; and it is the altitude of our buildings, not the extent of our horizon, which boundeth our view.

'From these causes I can the more readily forgive your loving to abide still in the country. There you have simplicity, free from city craft. Wherever you turn your eye the face of earth cheereth your view, the grateful temperature of the air refresheth, the very aspect of heaven delighteth you. Nothing occurs there to your view save the bounteous gifts of nature and tokens of sacred innocence. Yet would I not have you so enamoured of these delights as not to return to us as soon as you can. If the city displease you, yet Stepney (of which you are bound to be also solicitous) may afford you comforts equal to those you now enjoy. And thence you can occasionally visit the city, in which you have so great opportunities for the exercise of your goodness.

'For since those in the country are harmless in themselves, or at least liable to less wickedness, any physician will answer there. But from the height and inveteracy of the disorder in town, any but the most skilful shall attempt the cure in vain. It is true, there sometimes come into the pulpit of St. Paul's those who promise a cure. But af-

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ter having appeared to preach with plausibility, their life is so much at variance with their precepts, that they heighten more than they alleviate the complaint. Being themselves sickest of any, they cannot persuade others that they are fit persons to cure them; for to be handled by the diseased, fills the diseased only with contempt and aversion.

'But if (as the wise affirm) he is fittest to restore health in whom the sick hath most confidence, who can doubt that no one is so fit to cure the whole town as yourself? By whom, with what satisfaction they suffer their wounds to be handled, what confidence and obedience they shew you, you have already sufficiently experienced; and it is now farther manifested by the love of all toward you, and the certain incredible anxiety which prevails for your return. Come then at length my dear Colet, either for your Stepney's sake, which bewaileth your absence day by day as doth a child its mother, or for your country's sake which you ought to regard as a parent! Lastly, though this be the least motive for your return, come for my sake, who have devoted myself to you, and await your coming with impatience. Meanwhile I pass my time with Grocyn, Linacer, and Lilly. The first, as you know, is sole master of my life in your absence; the second, the preceptor of my studies; the third, my dearest companion in all I undertake.

'Farewell, and continue to love me as you have done.'

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Colet in his turn admired his disciple, and would sometimes say, England had but one wit, and that was young Thomas More.*

In a letter to Jodocus Jonas, Erasmus hath made Colet's eulogium, and with it the panegyric of Vitriarius, a franciscan. The characters of these eminent men, drawn by so great a master, deserve perusal; and if Erasmus hath not given the reins a little to his imagination and embellished his subject, it is no wonder that he so sincerely loved and admired them. They were excellent ecclesiastics, with a largeness of mind, a solidity of judgment, and a freedom of thought and speech, far beyond their contemporaries, very few excepted. In many things they bore no small resemblance to Erasmus himself. †

Colet it seems advised More to marry. ‡

In the number of More' friends was John Colte, Esq. of Newhall in Essex, a gentleman of good family, and who had frequently invited More to visit him. The invitation, it seems, was at last accepted, and it proved that Mr. Colte had three daughters *whose honest conversation and virtuous education*, if we believe Mr. Roper, or perhaps we may suggest some other attractions more current with youth, fixed his affections in that family. On this occasion More gave a remarkable instance of that peculiarity of character which distinguished him through life. His natural predi-

* More. † Jortin. ‡ More.

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lection was in favour of the second daughter; *yet when he considered,* saith Roper, *that it would be both great grief and some shame to the eldest, to see her younger sister preferred before her in marriage, he then of a certain pity framed his fancy to her, and soon after married her.*

It is to be wished that Mr. Roper had made use of almost any other expression than *pity,* in this passage. It appears to be perfectly within the compass of More's very peculiar character, that feeling for the disappointment which the elder sister might experience in finding her younger sister preferred to her in marriage, he might, before he suffered his heart to become too deeply engaged by the second, endeavour at least to appreciate with candour and affection every excellence which he could discover in the elder. Upon such a *closer* view of the merit which she proved herself in the end to have possessed, it is possible that he may have seen sufficient reason to satisfy his inclination of acting with what he in this case judged *propriety,* though the occasion, it is true, was a singular one for the exercise of a lukewarm principle.

Erasmus informs us that she was a very young girl, who had never quitted her parents and sisters in the country. This, he adds, was the more agreeable to his friend, as he had better prospect of forming her to his own manners; and he even took much pains in her education.*

* Epist. to Hutten.

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As More lived four years among the Carthusians, we may date this marriage 1507, when he was twenty-seven years of age. By this wife Jane, who survived their union only about six years, he had issue, Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecilia, and John; *in virtue and learning*, saith Mr. Roper, *brought-up from their youth; whom he would often exhort to take virtue and learning for their meat, and play for their sauce.* Upon his marriage he appears to have taken a house in Bucklersbury, and to have renewed with assiduity his application to the law.* 1507.

The year after More's marriage, Erasmus dedicated to him his celebrated Praise of Folly, on which occasion, as before to Whitford, the scholar highly compliments his friend. Bayle, and after him Jortin and others, appears to be mistaken in dating this admired piece two years later, and in saying it was written under More's roof; as may be seen by the dedication itself.† 1508.

Edward IV died in More's infancy; the short reigns of Edward V and Richard III followed, and afforded him in more advanced years a subject for historical composition; Henry VII had now filled the throne for twenty-three years, and his death approached. It requires no great sagacity to discover, that to keep the crown which singular good fortune had given him, and to accumulate riches, were the darling objects of this monarch's reign. The love of ac-

* Roper.

† Jortin, Life Eras. 4to. i, 35. and ii, 169, contradicts himself.

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cumulation appears indeed to have been instinctive in his character, and time discovered that though Cardinal Morton and Bray could not extinguish this propensity, they were not without their endeavours in tempering it. Empson and Dudley, their followers, whose reputation had no better basis than their servility, on the contrary, not only seconded but inflamed this humour in Henry, and they led the king to those extremities, which clouded his death with remorse, and found sufficient employment for his successor in assuaging them.

On wise considerations Henry had resolved to unite himself closely with Ferdinand and Isabella of Castile and Arragon, and with the house of Burgundy against France, the constant and dangerous enemy of England. A match was therefore agreed to, between Arthur prince of Wales and Catharine the infanta of Spain; whose eldest sister being married to Philip duke of Burgundy and earl of Flanders, a triple alliance was formed between England, Spain, and Burgundy, against France. Two hundred thousand ducats, the largest portion given for many ages with any princess, made her *no less* acceptable to Henry VII.

Five months, however, had only elapsed since the marriage, when prince Arthur died; and it proved, that his widow was not in a state of pregnancy. The reasons of state for preserving the alliance against France still existing, and Henry feeling no inclination to *refund* the jointure, it was proposed that Arthur's brother Henry, now prince of

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Wales and about twelve years of age, should be contracted to Catharine. The good Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, acknowledged to the king that he thought the step *neither honourable nor pleasing in the sight of God.* But Fox, bishop of Winchester, urged it, and the pope's dispensation surmounted every objection.

It was no great wonder that the pope readily granted what was so much for the interest of the papacy, though some cardinals and divines opposed it. Julius II was an enemy to Lewis XII, and wished to strengthen alliances against him. Moreover, his consent on this occasion obliged, as he thought, the succeeding kings of England to maintain the papal authority, since from it they derived their title to the crown. But it is remarkable that by a mightier decree than that of any temporal power, this act of Julius, instead of strengthening, occasioned the very extirpation of the papal dominion in this country.

Upon this bull Henry and Catharine were contracted. But there is reason to believe, that though he had approved it as a politician, Henry VII repented of this step before he died.

More incurred Henry VII.'s displeasure, who wanted to ruin him. He had been elected a burgess (by what means doth not appear) and sat in the parliament in which Henry, yielding to his ruling passion, demanded a subsidy for the marriage of his eldest daughter to the king of Scotland,

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rather in a view to his own emolument than to the repayment of the dower which he had given with his child. On this occasion More gave an admirable instance of his integrity, patriotism, and courage, by the strength with which he argued against the demand at that early age, undismayed by the servile senate which surrounded him. Mr. Tyler, a gentleman of the privy-chamber who was present at the debate, hastened to inform the king that a beardless boy had frustrated his purpose, and Henry, incensed by such an opposition to the darling propensity of his mind, determined to lose no opportunity of revenge. The means he employed were worthy of his avarice and rapacity, and unworthy of his princely station. More's poverty excluding him from a reasonable prospect of gratification, the king devised a groundless quarrel with his father, and Sir John More was imprisoned in the Tower until he had paid a fine of one hundred pounds.

More, shortly after this, met bishop Fox, a privy-counsellor, who called him aside, and, pretending great kindness, promised that if More would be guided by his advice he should soon be restored to the king's favour. But it afterward appeared, that the prelate's design was to inveigle More into a confession of his offence, that a punishment might be inflicted upon him with the semblance of justice. More had, however, the prudence or good fortune to escape this snare. Whitford, the bishop's chaplain, was More's intimate friend. On consulting him, he advised More by no means to follow Fox's counsel, *for my Lord, to serve the*

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king's turn, will not stick to agree to his own father's death. More, of course, returned not to the bishop.*

His abode in England was indeed rendered so unpleasant to him by the king's anger, that he meditated a voyage abroad, a design which was prevented by the death of Henry VII in 1509.† In the interval he lived in retirement, yet, as might be expected from a mind like More's, not without profiting of the occasion by the cultivation of his intellectual talents. We are told that he studied the French language, history, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music, and became a practical proficient on the violin.‡ His chief assistant in these pursuits was, probably, his extraordinary memory, to which, he once expresseth a wish that his wit and learning were equal.§

In his English works are preserved four more *things which Mayster Thomas More wrote in his youth for his pastime*, and which therefore belong to the present chapter. The first of them hath been supposed to have suggested to the celebrated Cowper the idea of his popular tale John Gilpin; but Mr. Hayley, the poet's biographer, disavows the claim, on grounds which perhaps many readers will deem sufficiently satisfactory. This piece proves, what an attentive reader will, in perusing our old writers, frequently remark, that the familiar and colloquial part of our language, being disused among those classes which had no ambition of

* Roper and More. † Roper. ‡ More. § Epist. pref. to Utopia.

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refinement or affectation of novelty, hath suffered very little change.* Our language was then in a great degree formed and settled; and it appears from Ben Jonson that More's poems, as well as his prose, were considered by his contemporaries as models of elegance and purity in language, though in general, like all the compositions of his age, they are censurable on the score of languor and diffuseness. The three last of these pieces recommend themselves more peculiarly to our notice on the present occasion, from the picture they afford us of the early impressions of More's mind.

'A merry Jest, *how a Serjeant would learn to play the Friar.*

Wise men alway
Affirm and say,
That best 'tis for a man,
Diligently
For to apply
The business that he can;

And in no wise
To enterprise
Another faculty,
For he that will
And can no skill
Is never like to theeh.†

* Johnson. † Thrive.

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He that hath left
The hosier's craft,
And falleth to making shone,
The smith that shall
To painting fall,
His thrift is well-nigh done.

A black draper
With white paper,
To go to writing school,
An old butler
Become a cutler,
I ween shall prove a fool.

And an old trot,
That can God wot
Nothing but kiss the cup,
With her physic
Will keep one sick
Till she have soused him up.

A man of law,
That never saw
The ways to buy and sell,
Weening to rise
By merchandise,
I pray God speed him well.

A merchant eke
That will go seek,
By all the means he may,
To fall in suit
Till he dispute
His money clean away;

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Pleading the law
For every straw,
Shall prove a thrifty man
With 'bate and strife,
But by my life
I cannot tell you whan.

When an hatter
Will go smatter
In philosophy,
Or a pedlar
Were a meddler
In theology,

All that ensue
Such craftes new,
They drive so far a cast,
That evermore
They do therefore
Beshrew themselves at last.

This thing was tried
And verified
Here by a serjeant late
That thriftly was,
Ere he could pass,
Rapped about the pate,

While that he would
See how he could
In God's name play the frere;
Now if you will
Know how it fell
Take heed and you shall hear.

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It happed so
Not long ago
A thrifty man there died,
An hundred pound
Of nobles round,
That had he laid aside.

His son he would
Should have this gold
For to begin withal;
But to suffice
This child, well thrice
That money was too small.

Yet ere this day
I have heard say,
That many a man certes
Hath with good cast
Been rich at last,
That hath begun with less.

But this young man
So well began
His money to employ,
That certainly
His policy,
To see it was a joy.

For lest some blast
Might overcast
His ship, or by mischance,
Men with some wile
Might him beguile
And 'minish his substance,

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For to put out
All manner doubt,
He made a good purvey
For ev'ry whit
By his own wit
And took another way.

First fair and well
Thereof much deal
He digg'd it in a pot,
But then he thought
That way was nought
And there he left it not.

So was he fain
From thence again
To put it in a cup;
And by and by
Covetously
He supped it fairly-up.

In his own breast
He thought it best
His money to inclose,
Then wist he well
Whatever fell
He could it never lose.

He borrow'd then
Of other men
Money and merchandise,
Never paid it,
Up he laid it
In like manner wise.

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Yet on the gear
That he would wear
He rought not what he spent,
So it were nice,
As for the price
Could him not miscontent.

With lusty sport
And with resort
Of joly company
In mirth and play
Full many a day
He lived merrily.

And men had sworn
Some man is born
To have a lucky hour,
And so was he,
For such degree
He gat and such honour,

That without doubt
When he went out,
A serjeant well and fair
Was ready strait
On him to wait
As soon as on the may'r;

But he doubtless
Of his meekness
Hated such pomp and pride
And would not go
Companied so
But drew himself aside.

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To Saint Cath'rine
Strait as a line
He gat him at a tide,
For devotion
Or promotion
There would he needs abide.

There spent he fast
Till all was past
And to him came there many
To ask their debt
But none could get
The value of a penny.

With visage stout
He bare it out
Even unto the hard hedge,
A month or twain,
Till he was fain
To lay his gown to pledge.

Then was he there
In greater fear
Than ere that he came thither,
And would as fain
Depart again
But that he wist not whither.

Then after this
To a friend of his
He went, and there abode,
Whereas he lay
So sick alway
He might not come abroad.

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It happed than
A merchant man
That he ow'd money to
Of an officer
Then 'gan enquire
What him was best to do.

And he ans'red
" Be not afraid
Take an action therefore
I you behest,
I shall him 'rest
And then care for no more."

I fear quoth he
It will not be
For he will not come out.
The sergeant said
" Be not afraid
It shall be brought about.

In many a game
Like to the same
Have I been well in ure,
And for your sake
Let me be bake
But if I do this cure."

Thus part they both,
And forth then go'th
Apace this officer
And for a day
All his array
He changed with a frere.

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So was he dight
That no man might
Him for a frere deny
He dopp'd and dook'd
He spake and look'd
So religiously.

Yet in a glass
Ere he would pass
He toted and he peer'd
His heart for pride
Lept in his side
To see how well he frer'd.

Then forth apace
Unto the place
He goeth in God's name
To do this deed;
But now take heed,
For here begins the game.

He drew him nigh
And softily
Straight at the door he knock'd
And a damsel
That heard him well
There came and it unlock'd.

The friar said
God speed fair maid
Here lodgeth such a man
It is told me;
Well Sir, quoth she,
And if he do what than?

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Quoth he, mistress
No harm doubtless,
It 'longeth for our order
To hurt no man,
But as we can
Every wight to farther.

With him truly
Fain speak would I.
Sir, quoth she, by my fai
He is so sick
You be not like
To speak with him to-day.

Quoth he, fair mai
Yet I you pray
This much at my desire
Vouchsafe to do,
As go him to
And say an Austin friar

Would with him speak
And matters break
For his avail certain.
Quoth she, I will
Stand you here still
Till I come down again.

Up did she go
And told him so
As she was bid to say.
He mistrusting
No manner thing
Said, maiden go thy way

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And fetch him hither
That we together
May talk. Adown she go'th.
Up she him brought
No harm she thought
But it made some folk wroth.

This officer
This feigned frere
When he was come aloft
He dopped than
And greet this man
Religiously and oft.

And he again
Right glad and fain
Took him there by the hand,
The friar then said
You be dismay'd
With trouble I understand.

Indeed, quoth he,
It hath with me
Been better than it is.
Sir, quoth the frere,
Be of good cheer,
Yet shall it after this.

For Christ his sake
Look that you take
No thought within your breast;
God may turn all,
And so he shall
I trust, unto the best.

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But I would now
Commune with you,
In counsel if you please,
Or elles not,
Of matters that
Shall set your heart at ease.

Down went the maid,
The merchant said
Now say-on gentle frere,
Of this tiding
That you me bring
I long full sore to hear.

When there was none
But they alone
The friar with evil grace
Said, I 'rest thee,
Come on with me,
And out he took his mace.

Thou shalt obey
Come on thy way
I have thee in my clutch
Thou go'st not hence
For all the pence
The may'r hath in his pouch.

This merchant there,
For wrath and fear
He waxing-well nigh wood,
Said, whoreson thief,
With a mischief,
Who hath taught thee thy good

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And with his fist
Upon the list
He gave him such a blow
That backward down
Almost in swoon
The friar did overthrow.

Yet was this man
Well fearder than
Lest he the fri'r had slain
Till with good raps
And heavy claps
He dawde him up again.

The friar took heart
And up he start
And well he laid about
And so there go'th
Between them both
Many a lusty clout.

They rent and tear
Each others hair
And clave together fast
Till with lugging
And with tugging
They fell down both at last.

Then on the ground
Together round
With many a sad stroke
They roll and rumble,
They turn and tumble
As pigs do in a poke.

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So long above
They heave and shove
Together, that at last
The maid and wife
To break the strife
Hied them upward fast.

And when they spy
The captains lie
Both weltring on the place
The friar's hood
They pull'd agood
Adown about his face.

While he was blind
The wench behind
Lent him laid on the floor
Many a joll
About the noul
With a great battledoor.

The wife came yet
And with her feet
She holpe to keep him down
And with her rock
Many a knock
She gave him on the crown.

They laid his mace
About his face
That he was wood for pain
The friar frap
Gat many a swap
Till he was full nigh slain.

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Up they him lift
And with ill thrift
Headlong along the stair
Down they him threw
And said *adieu*,
Commend us to the may'r.

The friar arose
But I suppose
Amazed was his head
He shook his ears
And from great fears
He thought him well afled.

Quoth he, now lost
Is all this cost
We be never the near,
Ill must he theeh
That caused me
To make myself a frere.

Now masters all
Here now I shall
End there as I began,
In anywise
I would advise
And counsel ev'ry man,

His own craft use
All new refuse
And lightly let them gone
Play not the frere;
Now make good cheer
And welcome ev'ry chone.

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‘ The words of Fortune to the People.

Mine high estate, power, and authority
If ye me know, ensearch and ye shall spy
That riches, worship, wealth, and dignity
Joy, rest, and peace, and all things finally
That any pleasure or profit may come by
To man his comfort, aid, and sustenance,
Is all at my devise and ordinance.

Without my favour there is nothing won,
Many a matter have I brought at last
To good conclude that fondly was begun,
And many a purpose, bounden sure and fast
With wise provision, I have overcast.
Without good hap there may no wit suffice,
Better 'tis to be fortunate than wise!

And therefore have there some men been ere this
My deadly foes, and written many a book
To my dispraise. And other cause there n'is
But for me list not friendly on them look.
Thus like the fox they fare, that once forsook
The pleasant grapes, and 'gan for to defy them
Because he lept and yet could not come by them.

But let them write, their labour is in vain;
For well ye wot, mirth, honour, and riches
Much better is than penury and pain.
The needy wretch that ling'reth in distress
Without my help, is ever comfortless,
A very burden, odious and loath
To all the world, and eke to himself both.

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But he that by my favour may ascend
To mighty pow'r and excellent degree,
A commonweal to govern and defend,
O! in how bless'd condition standeth he,
Himself in honour and felicity,
And over that, may farther and encrease
A region whole in joyful rest and peace.

Now in this point there is no more to say,
Each man hath of himself the governance;
Let every wight then follow his own way.
And he that out of poverty and mischance
List for to live, and will himself enhance
In wealth and riches, come-forth and wait on me;
And he that will be a beggar, let him be.'

'Thomas More *to them who trust in Fortune.*

Thou that art proud of honour, shape, or kin,
That heapest-up this wretched world its treasure,
Thy fingers shrin'd with gold, thy tawny skin
With fresh apparel garnish'd out of measure,
And weenest to have Fortune at thy pleasure;
Cast-up thine eye, and look how slipp'ry chance
Illudeth her men with change and variance.

Sometime she look'th as lovely, fair, and bright
As goodly Venus, mother of Cupid,
She becketh and she smil'th on every wight;
But this chear feigned may not long abide,
There com'th a cloud, and farewell all our pride.
Like any serpent she beginn'th to swell
And look'th as fierce as any fury of hell.

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Yet for all that, we brittle men are fain,
So wretched is our nature and so blind,
As soon as fortune list to laugh again
With fair countenance and deceitful mind,
To crouch and kneel and gape after the wind;
Not one or twain, but thousands in a rout,
Like swarming bees, come flickering her about.

Then as a bait she bringeth forth her ware,
Silver and gold, rich pearl and precious stone,
On which the amazed people gaze and stare
And gape therefore as dogs do for a bone.
Fortune at them laugheth, and in her throne
Amid her treasure and wavering riches
Proudly she heaveth as lady and empress.

Fast by her side doth weary Labour stand
Pale Fear also, and sorrow all bewept,
Disdain and Hatred on that other hand
Eke restless watch, from sleep with travail kept,
His eyes drowsy and looking as he slept.
Before her standeth Danger and Envy,
Flatt'ry, Deceit, Mischief, and Tyranny.

About her cometh all the world to beg;
He asketh land; and He to pass would bring
This toy and that, and all not worth an egg;
He would in love prosper above all thing;
He kneeleth down and would be made a king;
He forceth not so he may money have,
Tho' all the world account him for a knave.

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Lo thus ye see, divers heads divers wits,
Fortune, alone as divers as they all,
Unstable, here and there among them flits,
And at a venture down her gifts they fall;
Catch whoso may, she throweth great and small,
Not to all men as cometh sun or dew,
But for the most part, all among a few.

And yet, her brittle gifts long may not last.
He that she gave them looketh proud and high,
She whirl'th about and pluck'th away as fast
And giv'th them to another by and by.
And thus from man to man continually
She us'th to give and take, and slily toss
One man to winning of another's loss.

And when she robbeth one, down go'th his pride,
He weep'th and wail'th and curseth her full sore.
But he who receiv'th it on t'other side
Is glad and bless'th her oftentimes therefore.
But in a while, when she lov'th him no more,
She glideth from him, and her gifts they too,
And he her curseth as other fools do.

Alas! the foolish people cannot cease,
Nor 'void her train till they the harm do feel,
About her alway busily they press;
But Lord! how he doth think himself full well
That may set once his hand upon her wheel.
He holdeth fast; but upward as he sty'th,
She whipp'th her wheel about, and there he li'th

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Thus fell Julius from his mighty power,
Thus fell Darius, the worthy king of Perse,
Thus fell Alexander, the great conqueror,
Thus many more than I may well rehearse.
Thus double Fortune, when she list reverse
Her slipp'ry favour from them that in her trust,
She fli'th her way and li'th them in the dust.

She suddenly enhanceth them aloft
And suddenly mischieveth all the flock,
The head that late lay easily and full soft
Instead of pillows li'th after on the block,
And yet, alas the most cruel proud mock
The dainty mouth that ladies kissed have
She bringeth in the case to kiss a knave.

In changing of her course the change shew'th this,
Up start'th a knave and down there fall'th a knight,
The beggar rich and the rich man poor is,
Hatred is turned to love, love to despight;
This is her sport, thus proveth she her might.
Great boast she mak'th if one be by her pow'r
Wealthy and wretched both within an hour.

Poverty, that of her gifts will nothing take,
With merry cheer looketh upon the press
And seeth how Fortune's household go'th to wreck.
Fast by her standeth the wise Socrates,
Aristippus, Pythagoras, and many a leash
Of old philosophers. And eke against the sun
Baketh him poor Diogenes in his tun.

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With her is Bias, whose country lack'd defence
And whilom of their foes stood so in doubt
That each man hastily 'gan to carry thence
And asked him, why he nought carried out?
I bear, quoth he, *all mine with me about.*
Wisdom he meant, not Fortune's brittle fees,
For nought he counted his which he might leese.

Heraclitus eke list fellowship to keep
With glad poverty. Democritus also.
Of which the first can never cease but weep
To see how thick the blinded people go,
With labour great, to purchase care and woe.
That other laugh'th to see the foolish apes
How earnestly they walk about their japes.*

Of this poor sect it is common usage,
Only to take *that* nature may sustain,
Banishing clean all other surplusage
They be content and of nothing complain.
No niggard eke is of his good so fain
But they more pleasure have a thousand fold
The secret draughts of nature to behold.

Set Fortune's servants by them an ye wull,
That one is free, that other ever thrall,
That one content, that other never full,
That one in surety, t'other like to fall.
Who list to advise them both, perceive he shall
As great diff'rence between them, as we see
Betwixt wretchedness and felicity.

* Jests.

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Now have I shew'd ye both, choose which ye list,
Stately Fortune or humble poverty;
That is to say, now li'th it in your fist
To take here bondage or free liberty.
But in this point an ye do after me,
Draw ye to Fortune, labour her to please
f that ye think yourselves too well at ease.

And first upon thee lovely shall she smile
And friendly on thee cast her wandering eyes,
Embrace thee in her arms, and for a while
Put thee and keep thee in fool's paradise;
And forthwith all, whatso thou list devise,
She will thee grant it liberally perhaps,
But for all that, beware of afterclaps.

Reckon you never of her favour sure.
You may in clouds as eas'ly trace an hare,
Or in dry land cause fishes to endure,
And make the burning fire his heat to spare,
And all this world in compass to forfare,
As her to make by craft or engine stable
That of her nature is ever variable.

Serve her day and night, as reverently
Upon thy knees as any servant may,
And in conclusion, *that* thou shalt win thereby
Shall not be worth thy service I dare say.
And look yet, what she giveth thee to-day
With labour won, she shall haply to-morrow
Pluck it again out of thine hand with sorrow.

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Wherefore, if thou in surety list to stand,
Take Pov'rty's part and let proud Fortune go,
Receive no thing that cometh from her hand.
Love manner and virtue, they be only tho'
Which double Fortune may not take thee fro.
Then mayst thou boldly defy her turning chance,
She can thee neither hinder nor advance.

But an thou wilt needs meddle with her treasure,
Trust not therein and spend it lib'rally,
Bear thee not proud, nor take not out of measure,
Build not thine house on high up in the sky.
None falleth far but he who climbeth high.
Remember nature sent thee hither bare,
The gifts of Fortune, count them borrowed ware.'

'Thomas More *to them who seek Fortune.*

Whoso delighteth to proven and assay
Of wavering Fortune the uncertain lot,
If that the answer please you not alway
Blame you not me, for I command you not
Fortune to trust; and eke full well you wot
I have of her no bridle in my fist,
She runneth loose and turneth where she list.

The rolling dice in which your luck doth stand,
With whose unhappy chance you be so wroth,
You know yourself came never in my hand.
Lo in this pond be fish and frogs they both,
Cast in your net, but be you lief or loath,
Hold you content as Fortune list assign
For it is your own fishing and not mine.

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And though in one chance Fortune you offend,
Grudge not thereat but bear a merry face,
In many another she shall it amend.
There is no man so far out of her grace
But he sometime hath comfort and solace;
Nor none again so farforth in her favour
That is full satisfied with her behaviour.

Fortune is stately, solemn, proud, and high,
And riches giv'th to have service therefore.
The needy beggar catch'th an halfpenny,
Some man a thousand pounds, some less, some more.
But for all that she keepeth ever in store
From ev'ry man some parcel of his will,
That he may pray therefore and serve her still.

Some man hath good but children hath he none,
Some man hath both but he can get none health,
Some hath all three, but up to honour's throne
Can he not creep by no manner of stealth.
To some she sendeth children, riches, wealth,
Honour, worship, and rev'rence all his life,
But yet she pincheth him with a shrew'd wife.

Then forasmuch as it is Fortune's guise
To grant no man all things that he will aks,
But, as herself list order and devise,
Doth ev'ry man his part divide and tax;
I counsel ye, each one truss-up your packs
And take nothing at all, or be content
With such reward as Fortune hath you sent.

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All things which in this book that you shall read,
Do as you list, there shall no man you bind
Them to believe as surely as your creed,
But notwithstanding certes in my mind
I durst well swear, s true you shall them find
In every point each answer by and by
As are the judgments of astronomy.'

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CHAP. II.

Accession of Henry VIII.... Consummation of his marriage with Catharine of Arragon.... More re-appears in the world and writes verses on the coronation.... Anecdote of Emson and Dudley.... More's attachment to Erasmus.... He is made one of the under-sheriffs.... His high estimation as a lawyer.... He replies to Dorpius.... His second wife.... Henry desires to engage him in his service.... He accompanies Tonstall to Flanders.... His letter to Erasmus on his embassy.... Busleiden and Ægidius.... More's letter to Warham.... He pleads a cause for the pope.... I nighted, &c.... His account of his first advancement... Henry's earlier court.... The king's intimacy with More.... Luther.... Erasmus persecuted. .... More expected the reformation.... Edward Lee attacks Erasmus.... More defends him.... Brixius attacks More.... Erasmus defends him.... More's letter to the university of Oxford.... He is made speaker of the commons.... His speech on the occasion.... Anecdotes of Wolsey and More.... Wolsey wishes to send him to Spain.... Progress of Luther.... Henry writes against him, and More is suspected.... Luther's reply and Ross' rejoinder.... Erasmus writes against Luther.... More is exhorted to write.... His character in the Ciceronianus.... He is made chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster.... Anecdote of the king and More.... More is sent on foreign embassies.... His success at Cambray.... His loss by fire, and letter to his wife.

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FEW princes have ascended a throne with the more decided satisfaction of their subjects than did Henry VIII. In the place of a monarch sinking deeper in jealousy, avarice, and severity, as he advanced in years, men beheld a prince, young, handsome, accomplished, wealthy, and prodigal; who, in the eye of experience, gave flattering promises of future conduct, much more in that of popular enthusiasm. The nobility, humbled by the policy of his father, crowded to gain his favour and to share his profusion. The pleasures and gallantry of the age were assembled at his court. His father, to remove him from the knowledge of business, had engaged him in literature. The proficiency he made was no bad prognostic of his parts, and he became a lover of learning and the learned. His vehemence and ardour (which in time degenerated into tyranny) were interpreted as the failings of youth. The contending titles of York and Lancaster were united in him, and that impartiality of administration was expected which had long been unknown in our country. In a word, the English rejoiced in the death of Henry VII, and had great expectations from his son; but alas! he lived to disappoint these hopes and proved a tyrant.

One of the first measures which engaged the new king's attention, was the celebration of his marriage with the widow of his brother. Lord Herbert informs us that the king's graver counsellors told him, the same reasons which induced Henry VII to the match with Spain, first in the

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person of Arthur, and after his premature death in young Henry's own person, were still in force; that his pretensions on France made an alliance with that power unnecessary, while they rendered the united opposition of Spain desirable; and that there were natural causes of good neighbourhood sufficient to maintain him in friendship with Maximilian the emperor.

Catharine, moreover, declared herself to be still a virgin, and had given many proofs of her virtuous and amiable character. Ferdinand, her father, had given ample commission to his ambassador here, and the lady's presence would save time as well as expence; but should she depart the kingdom, a large dower must be yearly remitted from the country. That scriptural authority might not be wanting, this passage was quoted; *If brethren dwell together and one of them die and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger, her husband's brother shall go in unto her and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her: and it shall be that the first-born which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.** The dispensation formerly obtained from the pope was also urged; and in fine, about six weeks, after his father's death, the consummation of Henry's marriage took place with Catharine of Arragon, his brother's widow.

More, now about thirty years of age, re-appeared in the

* Deuter. xxv. 5.

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general reanimation at the commencement of the reign in which he was destined to be so great and so unfortunate; and probably to greater advantage than before, from the cultivation of his character and his acquirements in solitude under the royal displeasure. His classical pen was called-forth on the coronation, and the poem * he wrote in Latin is an elegant compliment to Henry and his queen, and a severe satire on the reign of his rapacious father. The dedication concludes with the emphatical words *vale princeps illustrissime, et, qui novus ac rarus regum titulus est, amatissime.*

When Emson and Dudley, those vile ministers of Henry VII.'s rapacity, were leading to execution, in consequence of their attainder by the young king in his infant popularity, though at the expence of his father's fame, More, with his usual archness, though without his accustomed humanity, is said to have interrogated Dudley, *have not I done better than you?* Dudley is said to have congratulated More in reply, that he did not ask forgiveness of Henry VII as he had been advised to do.†

The character of the good Erasmus, though it was as yet but little celebrated, had, it seems, its due influence on the discernment of More. The acquaintance they had formed at college, cherished by the similarity of their minds and their studies, appears by this time to have ripened into a strong attachment, and they now corresponded by let-

* Vol. ii. of this. † More.

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ter whenever they were apart from each other. When the great scholar again visited England in 1510, he is said, on his arrival, to have lodged with More. Dr. Jortin and others are, however, mistaken in ascribing to this meeting the composition of the celebrated Praise of Folly by Erasmus *in a week, to divert himself and his friend*, as we have already seen in the preceding chapter. 1510.

Soon after Henry's accession More was appointed one of the under-sheriffs of the city of London, by which office and his profession he was heard to say that he now gained, *without scruple of conscience*, above £400 per annum. There was at this time no cause of importance in which he was not retained on one side or the other; and *for his learning, wisdom, knowledge, and experience, men had such estimation*, continues Mr. Roper, *that before he came into the service of king Henry VIII, at the suit and instance of the English merchants, he was, by the king's consent, made twice ambassador in certain great causes betwixt them and the merchants of the Stilyard.* Erasmus, in his letter to Hutten, also gives us a high character of the request in which the talents of his friend were held, as well as of his integrity and moderation. Thus More, persevered for the present with assiduity in his profession, and he was twice appointed reader at Lincoln's-inn, viz. in the third and sixth years of Henry VIII.* 1512. 1515.

But his heart was too disinterested, and his mind too ex-

* Roper and Dugdale.

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pansive, to confine him rigidly to the duties of his profession. Thus we find him in the latter of these years enlisting in the cause of friendship and replying to Dorpius, a divine of Louvain, who had written against the Praise of Folly. While others contented themselves with reviling the good scholar over their cups or in private, Dorpius was the first who wrote against Erasmus. He condemned the Moriæ Encomium, as a satirical work in which the author ridiculed all orders and professions; not excepting even the ecclesiastics, who have commonly pretended that their function should serve them for a passport. He moreover endeavoured to dissuade Erasmus from undertaking the New Testament, but *graciously permitted him* to publish St. Jerom.

Knowing his youth and ductility, and that he had been inveigled by others into this attack, Erasmus replied with his usual mildness. He cleared-up some points to Dorpius, continued in the true charity of his heart to live on good terms with him, and even lamented his death. His friend More also replied to Dorpius in a long and laboured epistle, which is preserved among his Latin works. In this letter More proves the necessity of studying the Greek language, of which Dorpius had spoken with contempt; and he exposes in civil language the ignorance, impertinence, and malevolence of the attack upon Erasmus. Whatever motive influenced Dorpius, he was highly culpable for treating of subjects which he understood not, and for being the first in such an attack. A malignant mind and a mean

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spirit must have prompted him to condemn writings which he could not imitate, and to endeavour to make the man odious who was affording the public important instruction.*

More's first wife, as we have already remarked, survived their union only about six years; and two or three years after her death,† which brings us to our present period, he married Mrs. Alice Middleton, a widow with one daughter, by whom he had no children. More used to say of this lady, that she was *nec bella, nec puella*, and the great-grandson's account of her and of her marriage with More are curious.

'This (he writes) he did not of any concupiscence, for he would often affirm that chastity is more hardly kept in wedlock than in a single life; but because she might have care of his children, which were very young, from whom of necessity he must be very often absent. She was of good years, of no good favour nor complexion, not very rich; by disposition very near and worldly. I have heard it reported, he wooed her for a friend of his, not once thinking to have her himself. But she wisely answering him, that *he might speed if he would speak in his own behalf*, telling his friend what she had said unto him, with his good liking he married her, and did that which otherwise he would perhaps never have thought to have done. And indeed her favour, as I think, could not have bewitched, or

* Jortin. † More.

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scarce ever moved any man to love her. But yet she proved a kind and careful mother-in-law to his children, as he was alway a most loving father unto them; and not only to his own, but to her daughter also, who was married to Mr. Alington and mother to Sir Giles Alington.'

The same writer informs us that More taught this wife music with a view to render her less worldly.

Wolsey was already high in dignity; and More's fame having by this time attracted Henry's attention, the king desired the cardinal to engage him also in his service. Wolsey, we are told, acted honestly at least on this occasion, and endeavoured to accomplish the king's wish. He represented to More the importance of his services, and assured him (for perhaps then he understood not Henry's character) that royal bounty could not but repay them with liberality. More was not, however, to be prevailed upon, for the present at least, to exchange the independent station which his ability as a lawyer now gave him, for that of a courtier; and the excuses he made were for this time admitted.* No man ever strove harder, says Erasmus, to gain admittance at court, than More strove to keep out of it.†

He accepted, however, a diplomatic appointment in as-
1516. sociation with Cuthbert Tonstall in the year 1516; and proceeded with him to Flanders, to meet the ambassadors of

* Roper and More. † Epist. to Hutten.

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Charles prince of Castile, on affairs, as he informs * us, of no small importance. Yet even this service appears to have been protracted longer than was perfectly agreeable to More, though it produced him, on his return, the offer of a pension. To this offer, perhaps, the king's desire to retain More in his service may have materially contributed. In a letter written to Erasmus soon after his return, and preserved in his Latin works, More gives a very agreeable account of this expedition.

'Our embassy (he writes) for this too, as all else which concerneth me, interests you, hath proceeded happily enough, save that the affair was drawn into greater length than I either expected or wished. For, on leaving home, I looked for an absence of hardly two months, but consumed above six on that embassy. Yet a conclusion sufficiently agreeable was the result of this long delay. But seeing the business on which I went brought to an end, and other matters arising one out of the other which appeared the initials of still greater delay (a circumstance never wanting on diplomatic occasions), I wrote to the cardinal for leave to return, and used, among other friends, the assistance of Pace chiefly on the occasion, who had not yet left England. On my way home I met him unexpectedly at Gravelines, and in such a hurry that he could hardly stop to greet me.

'This office of ambassador never pleased me. Neither

* Utopia.

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is it likely to suit us laymen so well as it doth you ecclesiastics, who either have no wives and children at home, or find them wherever you come. We, when we have been a little while absent, long to be home again on their accounts. And again, when an ecclesiastic sets-out, he may take his whole family whither he will, and maintain them abroad at the expence of kings, when he must have done it at home at his own. But when I am absent I have two families to support, one at home and one abroad. The provision made by the king for those I took with me was sufficiently liberal; yet no regard was had to those who must be left at home, none of whom, you will conceive, I could desire to feel any want during my absence, as you know what a husband, father, and master I wish to be.

'Lastly, princes can repay such as you without any cost to themselves; but with regard to us, this is not so easy. Nevertheless, on my return, a pension would have been given me by the king (an offer, in point of honour or profit, not to be despised), but I have hitherto declined it, and think I shall continue to do so. For if I accept it, my present situation in this city, which I prefer to a higher one, must either be relinquished, or, which I should be very much against, be held with some dissatisfaction to our citizens; with whom and their prince, should any question arise as to their privileges (which sometimes occurs), they would think me less true to their cause because I was indebted to the king for my pension.

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'For the rest, some occurrences in my embassy gave me peculiar delight. And first, my long and constant intercourse with Tonstall; than whom no man is better informed in every elegant attainment, no man more correct in his conduct or agreeable in his conversation. Then I formed a friendship with Busleiden, whose fortune gave him to treat me magnificently, and his goodness, courteously. The elegance of his house, his excellent domestic economy, the monuments of antiquity he possesses (in which you know I take peculiar delight), lastly, his exquisite library, and his still more eloquent breast, completely astonished me.—But in the whole of my peregrination, nothing was more agreeable to me than the company of your friend Ægidius of Antwerp; a man so learned, merry, modest, and truly friendly, that may I perish if I would not freely give a good part of my property only to enjoy constantly his intercourse.'

Hieronymus Buslidius, here alluded to, an ecclesiastic of the Low countries, died very soon after this period, and bequeathed his property to the academy of Louvain, to erect a college where Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, should be taught. This noble institution gave offence to the illiterate divines who harboured there, while Erasmus, a living water in the desert, extolled Busleiden's liberality. They are vexed, he writes, that three tongues should be in request, and had rather remain as they are, *double-tongued;* indeed there is no teaching a new language to such old parrots.*

* Epist. 358.

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To Ægidius of Antwerp, also commended in this letter, More addressed his Utopia, which celebrated piece was written about this time. In the prefixed epistle the reader will find an agreeable picture of More's present avocations; but, he complains, they left him no leisure for literary pursuits.

The good Warham, choosing rather to retire from public employment than to maintain an unequal contest with Wolsey, resigned his office of chancellor. Stapleton hath preserved a letter written to him by More on this occasion, and accompanied by a copy of Utopia, which is interesting on account of the subsequent similar resignation of More. It is here translated.

Thomas More to Archbishop Warham.

'I have ever, good father, reckoned yours a happy lot. First, while you discharged with so much celebrity the office of chancellor, and now still happier, when, having resigned that office, you have betaken yourself to a desirable repose in which you may live to God and yourself— a repose, I say, not only more agreeable than were those occupations, but in my opinion more honourable than were all your honours. Many, and sometimes the worst of men, may be in office; you held the highest, and one which carries great authority in the execution, and which is obnoxious to sufficient calumny on the resignation of it. To lay it down then, as you did, of your own accord (the permis-

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sion for which I know cost you much trouble), none but a modest man would have wished, none but an innocent one have dared.

'You have many to appreciate and admire your conduct, and myself am not among the least strenuous on this occasion. Indeed, I know not, whether most to applaud your modesty in voluntarily relinquishing so high and splendid an office, your greatness in dispising dignity, or the innocence of your administration in being fearless of the consequence. Your conduct was certainly most excellent and wise; nor can I express how strongly I congratulate this your singular felicity, how much I rejoice for you, when I see you, good father, remote from secular employment, receding from forensic tumult, enjoying the honourable fame, the rare glory, of your well administered and well-resigned office; and, joyful in the consciousness of your past life, calmly devoting your remaining time to letters and philosophy.

'My own comparative misery makes me think daily more and more of this your happy condition. For, although I have no occupations worth the naming, yet, as weakness is easily overcome, I am so busy, that I have neither time to pay my respects to you in person, nor to apologize by letter for my omission. Thus I have hardly time to write you this, with a view of recommending to your favour this ill-finished little book, which a too partial friend of Antwerp, precipitated as it was rather than polished, thought

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worthy of the press and printed it without my knowledge. Although I think it unworthy of your dignity, experience, and learning, yet, satisfied as I am of your kindness and candour toward every endeavour, and having individually felt your goodness, I have the boldness to send it you; and hope, though the work prove of little worth, its author shall find some favour with you.

'Farewell most worthy prelate.'

An incident not long afterward occurred, which *drove* More into the distinction he had so studiously avoided. A valuable ship of the pope's coming into Southampton, and being claimed as prize by Henry VIII, the legate applied to the king, that his master might have counsel assigned him learned in the laws of this kingdom, to defend his cause; and, *as his majesty was himself a great civilian*, it was requested that the cause might be tried publicly, and in his presence. More had the honour of being chosen, as the properest lawyer of the time, to be counsel for the pope, and to report the arguments in Latin to the legate. A hearing of the cause was appointed before the chancellor and the judges in the star-chamber. Our advocate pleaded with so much learning and success, that not only was the ship restored to the pope, but *himself*, adds Mr. Roper, *among all the hearers, for his upright and commendable demeanour therein so greatly renowned, that for no entreaty would the king from henceforth be induced any longer to forbear his service.*

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Having no better place at that time vacant, Henry at first made More Master of the Requests, and a month afterward knighted him and made him a privy-counsellor. The precise date of these honours is not very certain, but we may safely limit them to the year 1517.* Weston, 1517.
treasurer of the exchequer, dying some time afterward, the king without sollicitation gave that place also to More.†

Of his first advancement the knight afterward wrote this curious account in a letter to bishop Fisher, which is here translated from Stapleton.

'I came most unwillingly to court, as every one knoweth, and as the king himself sometimes in joke tells me. And to this day I seem to sit as awkwardly there, as one who never rode before sitteth in a saddle. But our prince, though I am far from being in his especial favour, is so affable and kind to all, that every one, let him be ever so diffident, findeth some reason or other for imagining he loveth him; just as our London matrons persuade themselves that our Lady's image smileth upon them as they pray before it. I am neither so fortunate as in reality to perceive such favourable tokens, nor of so sanguine a temperament as even to flatter myself that I do so; yet such are his majesty's virtue and learning, and such his daily increasing industry, that seeing him the more and more advance in good and truly royal accomplishments, I the less and less feel this court life to hang heavily upon me.'

* Lord Herbert. † Roper.

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Nor was More singular in this his favourable opinion of Henry's earlier court, although royal favour may be supposed to have had some influence upon his judgment. The fragrance of her honourable fame, saith Erasmus, smelleth sweetly everywhere; for she hath a king possessing every worthy, princely attribute, a queen his fellow, and a number of worthy, learned, sedate, and discreet subjects.*

We are now therefore to behold More in a very different situation from those in which we lately viewed him. We find him *taken* from his practice as a lawyer, and from the condition of a private gentleman, to become an officer of state and the favourite of a king—*taken* we may truly say, for he certainly acquiesced in the royal favour, rather in obedience to the king than to gratify any passion of his own for power and grandeur. His simplicity of heart probably gave him a disrelish for the courts of princes and their intrigues, and it is possible that he may have already surmised from Henry's character the probable inconstancy of his favour. Under every advancement, we shall find that he still preserved the plainness and integrity which distintinguished him in private life. A superior station served but for a time to call-forth his superior talents; and in the end it displayed his superiority of character under the severest of human trials.

In the first years of his promotion, we are told Henry was in the habit of frequently sending for Sir Thomas and

* Epist. to Guilford.

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conferring with him in private in his closet on astronomy, geometry, divinity, and other subjects, as well as on affairs of state. They sometimes even ascended together in the night to the top of the house to observe, as well as converse of, the heavenly bodies;* a trait worthy of the early and more innocent years of Henry VIII, and a striking contrast to his subsequent character. The king holds More in such intimacy, saith Erasmus, that he never suffereth him to leave him—if he wanteth him in serious matters, he hath not a better adviser; if to relax his mind, he knoweth not a more festive companion.†

The company of Sir Thomas was indeed, it seems, so agreeable, that the king and queen frequently sent for him in the evening about this time, *to be merry with them*, saith Mr. Roper. This went so far, that the affectionate principle which the knight retained in his advancement, *I must chat with my wife and prattle with my children*,‡ was in danger of usurpation. His conversation became so entertaining to the king and queen, that he could not once in a month obtain permission to spend an evening with his family; nor could he be absent from the court two days in succession without being called for. More, however, justly considered the claims of his family in this particular as superior to those of his sovereign. Restraining, therefore, the natural vivacity of his disposition, he caused his conversation in the royal presence to become by degrees less

* Roper. † Epist. to Hutten. ‡ Utopia.

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and less attractive; and the consequence was, that his time became more his own.*

Leo X was at this time everywhere publishing his *indulgences*, to raise money under pretence, of waging war with the Turks say some, of bui ding S^t^. Peter's church say others. The dominicans being employed by him in Germany on this occasion, the augustinians, who pretended that the office belonged to them, were irritated. Martin Luther, professor of divinity at Wittenberg, and an augustinian, among others, examined this doctrine of indulgences. Finding it, as he thought, full of error, and being gifted by nature with an independence and intrepidity of character which would not allow him on such an occasion to remain a silent or inactive spectator, he publicly refuted it in 1517.

From this time, Erasmus began to be most maliciously persecuted by the ecclesiastics. They loudly complained that his bold and free censures of the monks, their pious grimaces and superstitious devotions, had opened the way for Luther. Erasmus, they said, laid the egg, and Luther hatched it. The religious disputes which opened the scene produced religious wars and cruel persecutions, a state of affairs sufficiently afflicting to More's mild and gentle friend, who often complained that his endeavours to reconcile the opposite parties, only drew upon him the resentment of both.† The minorite brethren, he said, deserved to be

* Roper. † Jortin.

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complimented as wits for their joke, but he laid a hen's egg and Luther hatched a very different bird.*

With his strong attachment to the church of Rome, it seems from the following anecdote that Sir Thomas expected one day the success of the reformation in this country, and perhaps his knowledge of Henry's temper contributed to the surmise. Mr. Roper says, when he commended to More the happy estate of this realm, which had so catholic a prince that no heretic dared to shew his face, so virtuous and learned a clergy, so grave and sound a nobility, and so loving, obedient subjects, all in one faith—the knight replied, *truth it is indeed son Roper*, and even exceeded him in commendation; *and yet son Roper*, he continued, *I pray God that some of us, as high as we seem to sit upon the mountains, treading heretics under our feet like ants, live not the day that we would gladly be at league and composition with them, to let them have their churches quietly to themselves, so that they would be contented to let us have ours quietly to ourselves.*

Edward Lee began also about this time to attack Erasmus, and to stir-up the divines against him. He not only treated the good scholar as one of little erudition and no judgment, but as an heretic and an enemy to the church; and did all he could to run him down and ruin him. Erasmus in return hath often said, the earth never produced an animal more vain, arrogant, scurrilous, ignorant, foolish;

* Epist. 719.

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and malicious, than Lee. Yet this man was advanced at court. He was chaplain and almoner to Henry VIII, was afterward employed by the king on several embassies, and lastly, was made archbishop of York.

More, though a constant friend to Lee, was much dis-
1519. pleased at his quarrelling with Erasmus. In 1519, and subsequent years, he wrote three letters to Lee, which are reprinted by Dr. Jortin in the appendix to his life of Erasmus. They inform us that he would have dissuaded Lee from publishing his censures of his friend, that he was very sorry when they were published, that he thought him far inferior to Erasmus as well in knowledge and ability as in credit and interest with the learned world, and that he judged this exploit would draw infamy and contempt upon the writer, and even an odium upon the English. Thus our Lee (adds the Doctor), who, had he kept the fool within doors, might have passed for a tolerable divine, chose rather to purchase renown, such as it was, by heading the clamorous half-learned censurers of Erasmus and of all reformations. Among those indeed he might hope to make a figure though not among more eminent persons, and it is no wonder that an ambitious man should choose rather to be the leader of a paltry sect, than to be lost among scholars of the second or third class.

Lee was ever an enemy to the reformation, and is extolled, as might have been expected, by Wood, Stapleton,

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More's great-grandson, and others. Bishop Burnet gives us a juster account of him.

Soon after this vindication of his friend, Sir Thomas was himself attacked. Brixius, or, as his contemporary Rabelais calls him, de Brie, had written a poem in 1513, intituled Chordigera, describing an action of that year between the English ship Regent and the French ship la Cordeliere. As he had given a false account of the engagement, and insulted and calumniated the English, More wrote several epigrams in derision of the poem. Brixius, picqued at the affront, revenged himself by an elegy which he intituled Antimorus, in which he severely censured all the faults which he thought he had found in the poems of More; but this piece was not published till 1520, and then at Paris *in compliance with the wishes of the author's friends.** 1520.

Erasmus, in a very good letter to Brixius, civilly, though freely, insinuated to him that he was a very child compared to More, and launched out as usual in praise of his English friend.† More at first despised the poem, and wrote to Erasmus that, to prove to the world the contempt in which he held it, he had a design of reprinting it himself.‡ He, however, afterward wrote an answer to it; which was no sooner published, than he received a letter from Erasmus, wisely exhorting him to pass the matter in silent contempt, for *that* alone was the conduct which the attack deserved. Sir Thomas soon saw his error, and, following his friend's

* La Monnoye, Menagiana iii, 115. † Epist. 511. ‡ Latin works.

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advice, he immediately recalled the publication, so that very few copies of it escaped into the world.* Yet Erasmus, although he was capable of giving his friend this good advice, had certainly himself too much of this very sensibility when attacked by malicious and inconsiderable adversaries. Such characters require a friend to advise them, *leave these men to themselves, they cannot live in their own writings, why should they live in yours?* and it is, after all, no such terrible matter to be misrepresented as a dunce, when time and truth must put folly to flight.†

To this period also, Wood ascribes the proof which More gave of his zeal for learning, by his letter to the university of Oxford on the study of Greek. After Grocyn came thither to teach Greek, a serious opposition was manifested to his progress. A faction of the students, denominating themselves Trojans, and who had their Priam, Hector, Paris, &c. declared themselves enemies to what they called the new learning, and one of them had the impudence to attack the Greeks from the university pulpit. More wrote a well-timed letter‡ in Latin to the university, and observed that even Cambridge, ever her inferior as a seminary, promoted the study of Greek; that her own chancellor Warham, Cardinal Wolsey, nay the king himself, wished to encourage it; and that therefore it was probable these ridiculous Trojans, the enemies of useful learning, would in the end have the old proverb applied to themselves, *sero sapiunt Phryges.*

* More. † See Jortin. ‡ Printed at Oxford in 4to. 1639.

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In the parliament holden at Blackfriars in the year 1523, Sir Thomas More was chosen speaker. He was very desirous of being excused from this office, and addressed the king to that effect in a speech which hath not been preserved.* His remonstrance, however, proving ineffectual, he was obliged to comply, and he made the following speech upon the occasion, preserved by Mr. Roper, which is here presented to the reader as a specimen of the eloquence of the knight, and of the manner of the age. 1523.

Sir Thomas More's Speech on being appointed Speaker.

'Since I perceive, most redoubted sovereign, that it standeth not with your pleasure to reform this election and cause it to be changed, but have by the mouth of the most reverend father in God my lord legate, your highness' chancellor, thereunto given your royal assent, and have of your benignity determined, far above *that* I may bear, to enable me, and for this office to repute me, meet; rather than you should seem unto your commons that they had made an unfit choice, I am therefore and alway shall be ready, obediently to conform myself to the accomplishment of your highness' pleasure and commandment.

'In most humble wise beseeching your most noble majesty, that I may, with your grace's favour, before I farther enter thereinto, make my humble petition for two low-

* Roper.

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ly petitions; the one privately concerning myself, the other the whole assembly of your common-house.

'For myself, gracious sovereign, that if it mishap me, in anything hereafter that is on the behalf of your commons in your high presence to be declared, to mistake my message, and, in the lack of good utterance, by my misrehearsal to pervert or impair their prudent instructions, it may then like your most noble majesty, of your abundant grace, with the eye of your wonted pity, to pardon my simpleness; giving me leave to repair again to the common-house, and there to confer with them, and to take their substantial advice, what things and in whatwise I shall on their behalf utter and speak before your noble grace, to the intent their prudent devices and affairs be not, by my simpleness and folly, hindered or impaired. Which thing, if it should so happen, as it were like to mishappen me if your gracious benignity relieved not my oversight, it could not fail to be, during my life, a perpetual grudge and heaviness to my heart. The help and remedy whereof, in manner afore remembered, is, my gracious sovereign, my first lowly suit and humble petition unto your noble grace.

'My other humble request, most excellent prince, is this. Forsomuch as there be of your commons, here by your high commandment assembled for your parliament, a great number, who are, after your accustomed manner, appointed in the common-house to entreat and advise of the common affairs among themselves apart; and albeit, most

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dear leige lord, that according to your prudent advice by your honourable writs everywhere declared, there hath been as due diligence used in sending-up to your highness' court of parliament the most discreet persons out of every quarter that men could esteem most meet thereunto, whereby it is not to be doubted that there is a very substantial assembly of right wise, meet, and politic persons; yet, most virtuous prince, since among so many wise men neither is every man wise alike, nor among so many alike well witty every man alike well spoken, and it often happeneth that likewise as much folly is uttered with painted polished speech, so many boisterous and rude in language see deep indeed and give right substantial counsel; and since also in matters of great importance the mind is so often occupied in the matter that a man rather studieth what to say than how, by reason whereof the wisest man and best spoken in a whole country fortuneth, while his mind is fervent in the matter, somewhat to speak in suchwise, as he would afterward wish to have been uttered otherwise, and yet no worse will had he when he spake it, than he had when he would so gladly change it; therefore, most gracious sovereign, considering that in your high court of parliament is nothing treated but matter of weight and importance concerning your realm and your royal estate, it could not fail to let and put to silence from the giving of their advice and counsel many of your discreet commons, to the great hinderance of the common affairs, except that every one of your commons were utterly discharged of all

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doubts and fears, how anything that it should happen them to speak should happen of your highness to be taken.

'And in this point, though your well-known and proved benignity putteth every man in good hope, yet such is the weight of the matter, such is the reverend dread that the timorous hearts of your natural subjects conceive toward your high majesty, our most redoubted king and undoubted sovereign, that they cannot in this point find themselves satisfied, except your gracious bounty, therein declared, put away the scruple of their timorous minds, and animate and encourage them and put them out of doubt.

'It may therefore, like your most abundant grace, our most benign and godly king, to give all your commons here assembled your most gracious licence and pardon, freely, without doubt of your dreadful displeasure, every man to discharge his conscience, and boldly, in every thing incident among us, to declare his advice. And, whatsoever happen any man to say, that it may like your majesty of your inestimable goodness to take all in good part; interpreting every man's words, how cunningly soever they be couched, to proceed yet of good zeal toward the profit of your realm and honour of your royal person; the prosperous estate and preservation whereof, most excellent sovereign, is the thing which we all, your loving subjects, according to our most bounden duty, of our natural allegiance, most highly desire and pray for.'

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It is probable that the design of the knight in this speech was to remonstrate against the known haughtiness with which Henry VIII treated his parliaments; and, under colour of the profoundest awe and veneration, to reprove the sovereign for his arbitrary restraint on debate. In this point of view, the speaker manifesteth more dexterity than at first sight may appear; a compliance with his haughty humour in this submissive language, being the only manner in which the king could be reproved or thwarted with a hope of success.*

Of this parliament the following anecdote is related. Wolsey, at this time in the zenith of his greatness, had expressed his displeasure, that no sooner was anything said or done in the house of commons than it was blown abroad in every alehouse. When the large subsidy was afterward demanded, the cardinal, fearing opposition from the commons, determined to be present in their house at the time the motion should be made. A debate in consequence arose in that house, whether he should be received with a few of his lords only, or with the whole number. The majority of the house were of the former opinion; but the speaker observed with his usual archness, *forasmuch as my lord cardinal lately laid to our charges the lightness of our tongues for things uttered out of this house, it shall not in my mind be amiss to receive him with all his pomp, with his maces, his pillars, pollaxes, his crosses, his hat, and the great seal too; to the intent that if he find the like fault with us hereafter,*

* Warner.

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we may be the bolder from ourselves to lay the blame, on those whom his grace bringeth hither with him.

Wolsey was received accordingly, and spoke with solemnity on the necessity of the grant. The commons heard him to an end in silence, and then made no reply. He addressed himself to some of the members in particular, but received no answer, for they had resolved to communicate with him through their speaker only. At last he demanded an answer of the speaker, *who*, continues Roper, *first reverently on his knees excusing the silence of the house, abashed at the presence of so noble a personage able to amaze the wisest in a realm, and afterward by many probable arguments proving that for them to make answer it was neither expedient, nor agreeable with the ancient liberty of the house, in conclusion for himself shewed, that though they had all with their voices trusted him, yet except every one of them could put in to his head of their several wits, he alone in so weighty a matter was unfit to make his grace answer.*

More seconded the subsidy from the beginning,* and this farce was played only upon the insolence of the cardinal; *who*, adds Mr. Roper, *displeased with Sir Thomas More who had not in this parliament in all things satisfied his desire, suddenly arose and departed.*

A few days afterward, Sir Thomas being in Wolsey's gallery at Whitehall, the latter said to him, *would God you*

* Lord Herbert.

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had been at Rome Mr. More when I made you speaker. Your grace not offended, so would I too, replied More; *I like this gallery my lord, much better than your gallery at Hampton-court.** This perhaps broke-off a quarrel for the time, but the fact was, as Erasmus justly observes in one of his letters, that the cardinal feared the knight more than he loved him.

He gave a proof of this afterward, by his endeavour to persuade the king to send Sir Thomas to Spain as ambassador. When Henry proposed it to More, the knight, prepossessed, says Mr. Roper, that the king by sending him thither would send him to his grave, represented to his majesty how unlikely he was to render him acceptable service there, yet was ready as in duty bound to fulfil his pleasure, though at the expence of his life. *It is not our pleasure Mr. More to do you hurt, but to do you good would we be glad,* replied Henry, in the better language of his heart; *we will therefore for this purpose devise upon some other, and employ your service otherwise.*

In the meantime the intrepid Luther, pursuing the career which, as we have seen, he had commenced in 1517, had detected the corruption of the court of Rome, her obstinacy in adhering to established error, and her indifference to truth, and from uttering *some doubts* as to the divine original of the papal authority, he at last shook the firmest foundations upon which the wealth and power of the church were

* Roper.

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established. Henry VIII, in addition to his rigorous acts for preventing lutheranism from invading his realm, had published a treatise against Luther which obtained him from the pope the well-known title *Defender of the faith.* From More's supposed instrumentality in this publication, we shall find that he was afterward accused as the cause of Henry putting a sword into the pope's hand to fight against himself. But the knight, we shall also find from his own letters, pleaded *not guilty* to this accusation. He owns that, by the king's appointment, and by consent of the writers, he was *a sorter-out and placer* of the principal contents of the tract; but it seems that More in fact advised Henry to insist less strenuously than he did on the pope's authority, from a foresight perhaps of the inconstancy of the monarch's character.

Luther replied to Henry, and, with his usual bluntness, treated his majesty as a liar and a blasphemer. A rejoinder appeared in the year 1523, under the name William Ross, which hath been generally ascribed to Sir Thomas, and is reprinted as his production in his Latin works. The writer, whoever he may have been, not only endeavoured to refute the arguments, but also followed in a blameable degree the too prevailing custom of the time in aiming to equal the abuse, of his adversary. The soundest sense and the strongest argument, when thus disfigured by the rancour of party spirit, and even scurrility, not only lose the weight they naturally possess, but their tendency will generally be found

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to be, that they chiefly disgust the reader by the deformity of the picture with which they present him.

The good Erasmus, not gifted by nature with the courage of a martyr, probably felt his worldly interests too much at stake to allow him to enter early and with freedom into these controversies. The importunate solicitations of the Roman party induced him, however, at last, to take the field by the publication of his dissertation on freewill. This piece was written with the good scholar's usual moderation and candour; yet it produced a reply from Luther in a severe strain of ridicule and invective, in his treatise *De servo arbitrio*. Erasmus was, with sufficient reason, much provoked at a treatment so rude and unmerited, which drew from him in rejoinder the first part of his Hyperaspistes.

More's strong attachment to the church of Rome, rendered him of course no friend to the great cause. We have a letter* of his to Erasmus in 1525, containing much spite 1525. and acrimony against the reformers, with pressing exhortations to him to publish the last-mentioned work. And two 1527. years later, we have bishop Tonstal's licence to him for reading *heretical* books, and an exhortation to him to imitate *the great example* of his king, by employing his leisure in answering them. That this advice was not in vain, we have pretty voluminous testimonies in More's published works; but we will advert more fully to the subject of his writings in our last chapter.

* Erasm. Epist. 334.

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The celebrated Ciceronianus of Erasmus, one of the most ingenious and lively of his productions, in which he agreeably rallies certain Italian purists who scrupled to use any
1528. word or phrase not to be found in Cicero, came out in 1528. The author's account of his friend More at this time is interesting.

'Fateor ingenium felicissime natum, et quod nihil non potuisset efficere si totum his studiis vacare licuisset. Cæterum, illo puero, vix tenuis odor literaturæ melioris demigrarat in Angliam. Deinde parentum auctoritas ad leges ejus gentis discendas, quibus nihil illiteratius, adegit; mox in causis agendis exercitatus, hinc ad reipublicæ munia vocatus, vix succisivis horis respicere potuit ad eloquentiæ studia. Tandem in regiam pertractus, et regni regiorumque negotiorum undis immersus, magis amare potest studia quam colere. Et tamen dicendi genus quod assequutus est, magis vergit ad Isocraticam structuram ac dialecticam subtilitatem, quam ad fusum illud Ciceronianæ dictionis flumen; quamquam urbanitate nihilo M. Tullio inferior est. Quoniam autem adolescens diu versatus est in poëmatibus scribendis, poëtam agnoscas et in oratione prosa.'

About this time died Sir Richard Wingfield, in whose room, without solicitation, the king made Sir Thomas More chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster.* The knight indeed grew into such favour with his majesty, that he was sometimes honoured with a visit from the king at Chelsea, his

* Roper and Erasmus.

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present residence, without previous notice. One day Henry came thither to dinner unexpectedly, and after dinner walked in More's garden for an hour, with one arm round the knight's neck.

'As soon as his grace was gone, relates Mr. Roper, I rejoicing thereat, said to Sir Thomas More, how happy he was whom the king had so familiarly entertained as I never had seen him do to any other, except cardinal Wolsey, whom I saw his grace walk once with arm in arm. *I thank our Lord, son,* quoth he, *I find his grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth as singularly favour me as any subject within this realm. Howbeit son, Roper, I may tell thee, I have no cause to be proud thereof; for, if my head would win him a castle in France* (for then was there war betwixt us) *it should not fail to go.*' This anecdote proves that More already understood Henry's character well.

While Sir Thomas was chancellor of the duchy, he was twice employed in foreign embassies in commission with Wolsey, once to the emperor Charles in Flanders, and again in France.* In 1529 he was appointed to accompany Cuthbert Tonstall to Cambray, where he assisted in the treaty called after that place.† 1529.

Here, Mr. Roper informs us, the knight *worthily handled himself, procuring in our league far more benefits unto this realm, than at that time by the king or his council, was thought*

* Roper. † Lord Herbert.

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possible to be compassed. And it was for his good services in this expedition, the son-in-law proceeds to inform us, that the king, when he afterward made Sir Thomas chancellor, caused the duke of Norfolk to declare publicly, how much England was indebted to him.

On his return from Cambray, Sir Thomas rode directly to the king at the court at Woodstock. Here information was brought him that a part of his dwelling-house at Chelsea, and all his barns, full of corn, were consumed by fire, and that the barns of some of his near neighbours were destroyed also. The letter he wrote to his lady on this occasion is preserved in his English works, and with it we will conclude the present chapter. The former part of it is perhaps addressed to her covetous disposition, while the latter part affords a most worthy instance of his own benevolence.

Sir Thomas to Lady More.

'Mistress Alice, in my most heartywise I recommend me to you. And whereas I am informed by my son Heron of the loss of our barns and our neighbours' also, with all the corn that was therein, albeit (saving God's pleasure) it is great pity of so much good corn lost, yet since it hath liked him to send us such a chance, we must and are bounden, not only to be content, but also to be glad of his visitation. He sent us all that we have lost; and since he hath by such a chance taken it away again, his pleasure be ful-

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filled! Let us never grudge thereat, but take it in good worth, and heartily thank him, as well for adversity as for prosperity.

'And peradventure we have more cause to thank him for our loss than for our winning; for his wisdom better seeth what is good for us than we do ourselves. Therefore I pray you be of good cheer, and take all the household with you to church, and there thank God, both for that he hath given us, and for that he hath taken from us, and for that he hath left us, which, if it please him, he can increase when he will; and if it please him to leave us yet less, at his pleasure be it!

'I pray you to make some good ensearch what my poor neighbours have lost. And bid them take no thought therefore; for if I should not leave myself a spoon, there shall no poor neighbour of mine bear no loss by any chance, happened in my house. I pray you be, with my children and your household, merry in God: and devise somewhat with your friends, what way were best to take, for provision to be made for corn for our household, and for seed this year coming, if ye think it good that we keep the ground still in our hands. And whether ye think it good that we so shall do, or not, yet I think it were not best suddenly thus to leave it all up, and to put away our folk of our farm, till we have somewhat advised us thereon. Howbeit, if we have more now than ye shall need, and which can get them other masters, ye may then discharge

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us of them. But I would not that any man were suddenly sent away, he wot not whither.

'At my coming hither, I perceived none other, but that I should tarry still with the king's grace. But now I shall, I think, because of this chance, get leave this next week to come home and see you; and then shall we farther devise together upon all things, what order shall be best to take.

'And thus as heartily fare you well, with all our children, as ye can wish! At Woodstock, the third day of September, by the hand of

Your loving husband,

THOMAS MORE.'

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CHAP. III.

Cardinal Wolsey.... His advancement, and quarrel with the emperor Charles.... Anecdotes of More and Wolsey.... The king's scruples regarding his marriage.... His inconsistency.... More's conduct in the matter.... Wolsey's fall.... More made chancellor.... The duke of Norfolk's speech and More's on the occasion.... More's improvement in the office.... His respect to his father, and impartiality to his family.... Anecdotes of his chancellorship.... He clears the chancery of causes.... He is offered money by the bishops for his writings.... Is again importuned by Henry on the divorce.... He determines to resign the seal.... Which he at last effects.... Henry's promise to him.... More's contempt of worldly grandeur.... His wife is more concerned.... Anecdotes of her.... More provides situations for his attendants, and calls together his family.... His poverty.... Death of his father, and his filial affection.... His letters to Erasmus on his resignation.... His monumental inscription.... His buildings and charity at Chelsea.... The remarks of Fox and others on More's persecution of heterodoxy ... State of the times.... More's own refutation of his calumniators.

It is now time to contemplate the lofty elevation of the powerful cardinal, whose fall made the way for Sir Thomas More's highest advancement.

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Wolsey was the son of a butcher of Ipswich. He received a good education, and discovered an early capacity, which obtained him a recommendation as tutor in the marquis of Dorset's family, to which his assiduity soon added the friendship of his patron. In time he was promoted as chaplain to Henry VII, and was employed by his majesty in a secret negociation regarding his intended marriage with Margaret of Savoy. His diligence and dexterity gained him his master's good opinion, but the king's death, for a time, retarded his advancement.

Fox, bishop of Winchester, having discovered that the earl of Surrey had supplanted him in young Henry's favour, he hoped, by introducing Wolsey, upon whom he cast his eye as a rising man, to the king's familiarity, to oppose a rival to Surrey in his insinuating arts; while Wolsey, the sly churchman likewise hoped, should be content to act a part in the cabinet *subordinate* to his promoter. But the fact proved, that Wolsey soon supplanted Surrey in Henry's favour, and Fox in his confidence. In the young monarch's parties of pleasure Wolsey took the lead, and forgetting his years and his profession, he promoted all the gaiety which suited Henry's inclination. His father's counsellors, he represented, were indeed men of experience, but they owed not their promotion to the young king's favour, and they obstructed his affairs by their jealousies. A better system would be, to entrust his authority to one who was the creature of his will, could have no other view than to his service, and having the same taste for pleasure with him-

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self, could acquaint him with business in the midst of gaiety. Wolsey, in short, soon became the too absolute minister of his sovereign.

The choice which he had made, Henry was by nature proud of maintaining; and Wolsey, while he directed the public councils, pretended a blind submission to his master's authority. Of his acquisitions there seemed to be no end, and a bare list of his church preferments would be tedious. The pope observed his influence over Henry, and deeming it politic to engage him in his interest, his holiness created him a cardinal. Eight hundred servants, of whom many were knights and gentlemen, immediately swelled his train, and the churchman's ostentation obtained a kind of proverbial fame. The good Warham, as we have seen, chose rather to retire, than to maintain an unequal contest with the cardinal. On his resignation of the office of chancellor, the great seal was given to Wolsey; and the retirement of the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, and of bishop Fox, consigned into the cardinal's hands every authority in the kingdom.

On the recal of Campeggio by Leo X, from his fruitless errand to procure a tithe from our clergy, for enabling the pope to oppose the Turks, Wolsey, his partner in the commission, was, by the king's desire, alone invested with the legantine power, together with the right of visiting all the clergy and monasteries, and even of suspending all the laws of the church for a year. This new dignity not only af-

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forded the cardinal a new opportunity of displaying his favourite state, but being now by the pope's commission and the king's favour invested with all power, ecclesiastical as well as civil, he erected what he called the legantine court, a tribunal, to the authority of which, no man knew the boundaries. He gave it an inquisitorial and censorial power even over the laity; and the clergy, especially the monks, were obliged to purchase indemnities, by large sums paid to the legate or to his judge. By virtue of his commission, he pretended to assume the jurisdiction of all the bishop's courts, particularly that of judging of wills and testaments; and he presented to whatever benefices he pleased, without regard to right of election or of patronage.

When Maximilian died, the kings of France and Spain became candidates for the imperial crown, and the success of Charles enabled Henry, by the power and situation of his kingdom, to hold the balance between those powers, which seemed to contend for the dominion of Europe. Francis solicited an interview with Henry near Calais, in the hope of being able to gain upon his friendship and confidence. But Charles, hearing of the intended interview, determined to take the opportunity in his passage from Spain to the Low countries, of paying Henry a still higher compliment, by visiting him at Dover; and it was here that that politic prince instilled into the aspiring cardinal the hope of attaining the papacy. Yet Adrian VI, who had been tutor to the emperor, succeeded Leo in the

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papal chair, and Charles on paying another visit to England renewed to Wolsey his former promises. As Adrian's age and infirmities promised a speedy vacancy, the cardinal for that time dissembled his resentment; but when Adrian died and Clement VII succeeded, Wolsey became fully sensible of the emperor's insincerity, and began to estrange himself from the imperial court.*

More had the courage to oppose Wolsey in the council, as well as in parliament. To the former meeting Sir Thomas no doubt referreth, in the story he tells in one of his letters,† of the cardinal's project that England should support the emperor in his war with France.

'*Some*, he writes, thought it wise, that we should sit still and leave them alone. But evermore my lord used the fable of the wise men; who, because they would not be washed with the rain which should make everyone a fool, hid themselves in caves. But when the rain had made the rest fools, and these came out of their caves and would utter their wisdom, the fools agreed together against them, and overcame them. And so, said his grace, if we would be so wise as to sit in peace while the fools fought, they would afterward make head, and all fall upon us.—This fable helped the king and the realm to spend many a fair penny.'

More's great-grandson informs us, that the knight alludes

* Cavendish, Hume, &c. † Eng. works.

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to Wolsey also in his book *of comfort in tribulation*, when he speaks of a great prelate in Germany, who, when he had made an oration before a large assembly, would bluntly ask those who sat at table with him, *how they all liked it? and he who brought forth a mean commendation of it, was sure to have no thanks for his labour.*

'On a time,' adds the same writer, 'the cardinal had drawn a draft of certain conditions of peace between England and France, and he asked Sir Thomas More's counsel therein, beseeching him earnestly that he would tell him, if there were anything therein to be misliked; *and he spoke this so heartily*, saith Sir Thomas, that he believed verily that he was willing to hear his advice indeed. But when Sir Thomas had dealt really therein, and shewed wherein that draft might have been amended, he suddenly rose in a rage and said, *by the mass thou art the veriest fool of all the council!* At which Sir Thomas smiling, said, *God be thanked that the king our master hath but one fool in all his council.*'

This incident perhaps led to the former allusion by More, and will remind the reader of the story of Gil Blas and the archbishop. It is certainly disagreeable to be placed in the situation of Gil Blas, and connected with one who will take it in dudgeon, if you do not smoke him with as much incense, as would satisfy three or thrice three goddesses.*

* Jortin.

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Mr. Roper agrees with those historians, who ascribe to Wolsey's spirit of revenge against the emperor, the inflammation of Henry's scruples regarding the marriage with Catharine, his aunt. 'And for the better achiving thereof,' continues Roper, 'he requested Longland the bishop, being ghostly-father to the king, to put a scruple into his grace's head, *that it was not lawful for him to marry his brother's wife*. Which the king not sorry to hear of, opened it first unto Sir Thomas More, whose counsel he requested therein, shewing him certain places of scripture that seemed somewhat to serve his appetite.'

This happened previously to More's departure for Cambray.

Now Henry's case, if we believe himself, was completely a case of conscience; and he was greatly disquieted on account of his incestuous intercourse with his brother's widow. But is his majesty's word in his own cause to be alway relied upon? and if there were difficulties in such a marriage which might occasion scruples, how came they not to have arisen earlier in the course of eighteen years? If, again, Henry was convinced that his marriage was contrary to God's holy law, was it not strange that one pope could grant a dispensation for it, and then another pope declare it void? Did not his pleasure and his cause require a limit to the papal power, while his principles and his application to the pope declared that power unlimited? and will it be too severe to conclude, that when Henry found he

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could not carry his point and preserve his principles, he determined that his *passions* should not at any rate prove the weak part to give way; and that what he attempted at first from resentment, in forsaking the holy see, he might in time bring himself to believe was indeed the cause of God and of religion?

The fact is, that Catharine was six years older than Henry, and the purity of her character was a poor recompence in his estimation for the loss of her beauty. Her children, save one daughter, all died in early infancy, and the king was very desirous of having male issue. Lastly, the beauty of Ann Boleyn, maid of honour to the queen, had probably the chief influence on this occasion; and her virtue left Henry no hope of gratifying his passion, except by raising her to the throne. No wonder then that a divorce from Catharine was absolutely necessary.

More perused the passages of scripture pointed-out by the king, but excused himself from giving an opinion, *because he had not professed divinity*. Henry, however, urged him so strongly, that More besought the time requisite for a deliberation of such importance; and the king told him that Tonstall and Clark, bishops of Durham and Bath, with others of his privy council, should confer with him on the subject.*

Now would to our Lord son Roper, exclaimed Sir Tho-

* Roper.

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mas one day at Chelsea water-side, upon condition that three things were well established in christendom, I were put in a sack and here presently cast into the Thames.' Mr. Roper was naturally curious to know what these three things were, and the knight continued—' in faith son they be these. The first is, that whereas the most part of christian princes be at mortal wars, they were all at universal peace. The second, that whereas the church of Christ is at this present sore afflicted with many errors and heresies, it were settled in perfect uniformity of religion. The third, that whereas the matter of the king's marriage is now come in question, it were, to the glory of God and quietness of all parties, *brought to a good conclusion.*'

When Sir Thomas came next to court he said to the king, ' to be plain with your grace, neither my lord of Durham, nor my lord of Bath, though I know them both to be wise, virtuous, and learned prelates, nor myself with the rest of your council, being all your grace's own servants, for your manifold benefits, being daily bestowed on us, so much bounden unto you, be in my mind meet counsellors for your grace herein. But if your grace mean to understand the truth, such counsellors may you have devised, as neither for respect of their own worldly commodity, nor for fear of your princely authority, will be inclined to deceive you.' When he named these counsellors, they proved to be Jerome, Austin, &c., and he produced the authorities which he had collected out of them. ' Which, although the king,' continues Mr. Roper, ' as disagreeable to his desire, did not

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very well like-of, yet were they by Sir Thomas More, who in all his communication with the king in that matter had alway most discreetly behaved himself, so wisely tempered, that he both presently took them in good part, and oftentime had thereof conference with him again.'

After More's return from Cambray, Henry again opened with him the question of his divorce; and declared to him, that although at his departure he despaired of success, yet since that time he had conceived great hopes of being able to accomplish it. For, though his marriage, being originally against the positive laws of the church and the written law of God, was rectified by the dispensation from Rome, yet was there *another thing found out of late*, whereby it appeared to be so directly against the law of nature that the church could in nowise dispense it. Henry then referred him to Dr. Stokesly, newly created bishop of London, *and in that case chiefly credited*, says Mr. Roper.

But it was More's great characteristic that no hope of gain or fear of disgrace could induce him to swerve from the dictates of his conscience; and, notwithstanding his conference with the bishop, he saw no reason to change his former opinion. Stokesly, however, reported favourably of More to the king, saying, the knight was truly desirous of seeing something in the case in his majesty's favour. The fact is, Wolsey had offended Stokesly, and the bishop wished to shew himself more solicitous than the cardinal as to the king's favourite object.*

* Roper.

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Clement, still smarting from the sack of Rome, was at this time anxious for his personal safety, and well knew that the emperor could alone restore the Medici to their dominion in Florence. The cause of Charles was naturally that of queen Catharine, and a powerful one with the pope compared to that of Henry. No wonder then that the commission, which on Henry's application he granted to Wolsey and Campeggio, to try the matter here, proved inconclusive, and that the cause was soon evoked to Rome.

Wolsey well knew that this measure was the certain forerunner of his fall, for he knew that Henry expected his ministers to be answerable for the success of their undertakings. The motion of the cardinal's ruin became now as accelerated, as had before been that of his advancement; and in fine, the great seal was demanded from him and given by the king to Sir Thomas More.

Thus the fall of Wolsey made way for Sir Thomas More to become chancellor of England, and it hath been supposed by some, in which number is Mr. Roper, that one reason with Henry for giving him the seal, was to render him more favourable to the cause the king had so much at heart. Wolsey himself is reported to have said, that he thought no man in England worthier of the appointment than More.*

The knight was attended through Westminster-hall to his

* More.

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seat in the chancery by the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk. The speech made by his grace of Norfolk on the occasion, and the subsequent one by Sir Thomas, are here translated from Stapleton.

The Duke of Norfolk's Speech.

'It hath pleased his majesty (and may it prove happy for the whole realm of England!) to raise to the high dignity of chancellor, Sir Thomas More, a man sufficiently known to himself and to his kingdom. His majesty hath done this, from no other motive or respect whatever, than because he perceived in this man all the endowments which his people could desire or himself could wish, for the due discharge of the high office. His understanding, his integrity, the innocence of his life, and his happy genius, have not only been celebrated among his countrymen from his early youth, but known for many years past to the king himself also. Of this his majesty hath had very ample experience in many and great concerns at home and abroad, in various offices which he hath filled, in foreign embassies of great importance, and in his daily counsels in affairs of state. He hath thought his wisdom in deliberation, his truth in uttering his real sentiments, and his eloquence in adorning what he uttered, surpassed by none. From such a man every thing is to be expected; and since his majesty wisheth his people to be governed with equity and justice, integrity and wisdom, he hath appointed him chancellor; that his people may enjoy peace and justice, and the kingdom honour and fame.

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'It may seem a novelty that this dignity is conferred upon a layman, a married man, and one of no high birth, when heretofore it hath been given to highest prelates and nobility: But what any one may think deficient in these respects, is abundantly compensated by the admirable virtues of this man, and his incomparable gifts of genius and of nature. The king hath therefore regarded, not *how great*, but *what* a man he is; not his titles, but his merits; not his station, but his ability. Lastly, his majesty would shew by his choice of Sir Thomas More, that excellent men are not wanting among his gentry and the laity, to fill the offices occupied by ecclesiastics and nobles; which being a blessing more rarely afforded by the Deity, his majesty esteemeth it the greater and more dear to his people. Receive then More for your chancellor under these happy auspices, and expect every prosperity from the choice which his majesty hath made.'

Sir Thomas More's Speech.

'Most noble duke, and ye my honourable lords and gentlemen. Although I know that what his majesty hath been pleased should be said of me on this occasion, and which your grace hath amplified in most elegant terms, is as unworthy of me, as I wish it were true, and as this office particularly requires; and although your speech hath agitated me more than I can well express; yet this incomparable favour of his majesty cannot but be most grateful to me, that he thinks so favourably of me, and commends my me-

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diocrity to you so honourably. And I cannot but return your grace my most hearty thanks, who have thus amplified the commands of his majesty in an elegant and eloquent oration. For the matchless favour alone of his majesty toward me, his generosity and the incredible propension of his royal mind to me, by which my small merits have now for many years been distinguished, and no desert of mine, cause this new honour and these commendations. For who am I, or what the house of my father, that his majesty should accumulate so many and so great honours upon me? Inferior to the least of his favours, of this station and honour I am certainly unworthy, and hardly equal to the discharge of its duties.

'Unwillingly I came, as his majesty hath often allowed, to court and to his service; but this dignity is most of all against my will. Yet such is the goodness, such the benignity of his majesty, that he magnifieth the smallest duties of his subjects; and richly remunerates his servants, though they have little merit, if they be but desirous of pleasing him. In this number I have ever wished to be, though I could not reckon myself among the meritorious.

'This being the case, you will all easily perceive with me, how great a burden is imposed upon me, that my diligence and duty may correspond with the king's great favour, and that I may answer his high expectation of me. These praises were therefore the less grateful to me, the more I knew the difficulty of my duty, and how few aids I

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had to make myself appear not unworthy of them. The burden is greater than my shoulders will bear, the honour greater than my merits; it is a care, not a glory; a solicitude, not a dignity. I must bear it with my best exertions, and fulfil the duty as dexterously as I can. But a great stimulus to my success will be, the strong desire which hath through life been highest in my mind, and which I acknowledge now chiefly to actuate me, of satisfying his majesty's high claims upon me. And I rely upon this being more easy to me, the more I find all your good wills to correspond with the king's favour. For my desire of doing right, united with your favourable acceptance, will certainly establish the success of my endeavours, and make them, though small, seem great and praise-worthy. What we set-about cheerfully, we achieve happily; and what is kindly received appears best executed. As therefore ye hope the best possible of me, so, though I cannot promise ye the best possible, yet promise I the best I can perform.

'But when I look upon this seat, when I recollect who and how great persons have filled it before me, when I contemplate who sat in it last, a man of what singular wisdom, of what skill in business, of what splendid and long-prosperous fortune, with a high and inglorious fall at last, I see the difficulty of my situation before me, and my new honour is rendered less grateful and pleasant to me, than it may seem to many. For it is difficult to succeed with approbation to one of such genius, wisdom, authority, and splendour, or to trace his footsteps with an equal pace. It

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s like burning a candle after the setting sun. And the unexpected and sudden fall of so great a man is a terrible admonition to me, not to let my new honour please me too much, or its splendour dazzle my eyes.

'I therefore ascend this seat, as one which is full of labour and hazard, while it is empty of true and solid honour. The higher it is, the greater the precipice I must guard against, as not only the nature of the thing, but the recent example sufficiently warn me. And unless, under these circumstances, the incredible propension of his majesty toward me, and the good will of you all, which I gather from your agreeable countenances, recreated and refreshed me, I might stumble at this very entrance, and perhaps faint; this seat would not seem pleasanter to me, than did the sword which hung by a horse-hair over the head of Damocles while he occupied the state-chair of Dionysius in the midst of honours and delicacies. This then will I ever keep in mind, this have alway before my eyes, that this seat will in such degree be honourable to me, full of dignity and splendour, a new and renowned preferment, as I continue with all care and vigilance to administer my high office with fidelity and wisdom, and as I keep in mind that my enjoyment of it may be but short and precarious. The one, my diligence ought to accomplish; the other, the example of my predecessor teach me.

'This being the case, you will all the more easily appreciate what pleasure this high office, this effusion of the

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noble duke, or this matchless favour of his majesty, afford me.'

'And as they had before charged him,' adds Mr. Roper, 'on the king's behalf, uprightly to administer indifferent justice to the people, without corruption or affection; so did he likewise charge them again, that if they saw him at any time in anything to digress from any part of his duty in that honourable office, even as they would discharge their own duty and fidelity to God and the king, so should they not fail to disclose it to his grace, who otherwise might have just occasion to lay his fault wholly to their charge.'

The reader will recollect, that this speech was delivered extempore, nearly three hundred years ago, upon that difficult subject, a man's self. The speaker seems sufficiently to evince his acquaintance with his sovereign's character, and that he foresaw it would not suit his own conscience and inclination long to enjoy his dignity.

Having now traced Sir Thomas More to the summit of his profession, and to the highest dignity which, as a layman, he could possess in this country, we are next to view the integrity of his administration in it, and his incorruptible mind in the midst of worldly greatness.

Speedily was a remarkable alteration to be perceived in 1530.
the discharge of the office. The pride of Wolsey rendered

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him inaccessible to persons of common rank, and bribery to his attendants was requisite for reaching his presence only. But the new chancellor, the poorer and meaner a suiter was, the more affably would he address him, the more attentively hear his business, and the more speedily dispatch it.* He used commonly every afternoon (says Mr. Roper) to sit in his open hall, to the intent that if any person had any suit unto him, they might the more boldly come to his presence and open their complaints before him. His manner was also, to read every bill himself before he would award any subpœna; which being matter worthy of subpœna, he would set his hand to it; if otherwise, he cancelled it.

His father, Sir John More, now nearly ninety years of age, was still a judge of the king's-bench when More became chancellor. Whenever he passed through Westminster-hall to his place in the chancery by the court of king's-bench (says Mr. Roper) if his father had seated himself ere he came, he would go into the same court, and there reverently kneeling down in the sight of them all, duly ask his father's blessing. And if it fortuned that his father and he, at readings in Lincoln's-inn, met together, as they sometimes did, notwithstanding his high office he would offer in argument the pre-eminence to his father; though he, for his office sake, would refuse to take it.

No one who understands More's character, will be sur-

* More.

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prized at finding, that the claims of friendship or relationship had not the smallest influence over him in the impartial administration of justice.

One of his sons-in-law said to him one day, while he was chancellor, that in Wolsey's time not only they of his privy-chamber, but his very door-keeper, made great profits; whereas Sir Thomas was so easy of access to every degree of persons, that if, in his attendance upon him, he took any fee, he should injure the parties, by making them pay for what they could obtain for themselves, and which, though commendable in Sir Thomas, was not profitable to him. 'You say well son,' replied the knight, 'I do not mislike that you are of conscience so scrupulous. But many other ways be there, son, that I may both do you good and pleasure your friend also. For sometimes may I by my word stand your friend in stead; and sometimes may I by my letter help him; or if he have a cause depending before me, at your request I may hear him before another; or if his cause be not all the best, yet may I move the parties to fall to some end or arbitrament. Howbeit, this one thing, son, I assure thee on my faith, that if the parties will at my hands call for justice, then were it my father stood on one side and the devil on the other, his cause being good, the devil should have right.'

Another of his sons-in-law, Mr. Heron, had a cause pending in chancery, and presumed so much upon the favour of Sir Thomas, that he would not be persuaded to agree

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to any compromise. The result was, that the chancellor, on hearing the cause, made a decision directly against him.*

His talent for drollery could not forsake More, even in his highest elevation. An attorney of the name of Tub, it is said, once brought him a cause for subscription, which the knight, finding the matter frivolous, signed *A Tale of a Tub;* and Tub bore away the cause in triumph, without at that time discovering the joke.†

While he was sitting in his hall one day, a beggar came to him to complain, that Lady More detained a little dog which belonged to her. The chancellor sent for his lady and ordered her to bring the dog with her. He took it into his hands, and placing Lady More at the upper end of the hall, desired the beggar to stand at the lower end. *I sit here*, he said, *to do every one justice;* and he desired each of them to call the dog. The little favourite immediately forsook his new mistress and ran to the beggar; upon which Lady More was compelled to indulge her partiality by purchasing the animal.‡

The duke of Norfolk came to dine with Sir Thomas one day at Chelsea while he was chancellor, and found him at church singing in the quire with a surplice on. 'God's body, God's body, my lord chancellor, said his grace as they went home, what a parish clerk, a parish clerk?—you dis-

* Roper. † More. ‡ Ibid.

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honour the king and his office.' 'Nay,' replied Sir Thomas, smiling, 'your grace may not think that the king, your master and mine, will with me for serving God, his master, be offended, or thereby account his office dishonoured.'*

Few injunctions as he granted while he was chancellor to stop proceedings at common law, he had yet gone too far in this particular to obtain the approbation of all the judges; whereof he received information from Mr. Roper.

Sir Thomas hereupon caused the chief of the six clerks to make a docket containing the whole number and causes of all such injunctions as had already passed in his time, or were then pending before him, and invited all the judges to dine with him in the council-chamber at Westminster. After dinner, he hinted at the complaints he had heard, and then displayed so clearly the motives of his conduct, that they were compelled to confess they would have acted similarly under similar circumstances. He then observed that if the justices of every court (unto whom the reforming the rigour of the law appertained) would, in their own discretion, as he thought they were in conscience bound, reform that rigour themselves, he would grant no more injunctions. Which, when they refused, *forasmuch as yourselves, my lords*, he said, *drive me to that necessity of awarding-out injunctions to relieve the people's injury, you cannot hereafter any more justly blame me. I perceive, son*, he add-

* Roper.

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ed to Mr. Roper, *why they like not so to do. For they see that they may, by the verdict of the jury, cast-off all quarrels from themselves on those; which they do account their chief defence. And therefore am I compelled to abide the adventure of all such reports.**

So indefatigable was More in his application to business, and so expert in the dispatch of it, that it is said, during his presidency in the chancery, having one day ended a cause, and calling for the next which was to be heard, he received for answer that *there was not another cause depending.*† This fact he ordered to be entered upon record, and it gave rise, probably at a later day, to the following epigram.

When More sometime had chanc'llor been
No *more* suits did remain;
The same shall never *more* be seen
Till More be there again.

More, while he was chancellor, cannot be supposed to have had much leisure for religious controversy. Yet his abilities were in request to oppose the reformers, and his English works abundantly prove what his son-in-law asserts, that he set-forth divers profitable works in defence of the *true* christian religion against *heresies* secretly sown-abroad in the realm.

The bishops, considering that notwithstanding the favour

* Roper. † More.

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of the king, he was not a rich man, agreed at a convocation, with others of the clergy, to recompence him with a sum of money (supposed to have been four or five thousand pounds), to be raised among them. The bishops of Bath, Durham, and Exeter, waited upon him in consequence, and acknowledging the obligation of their body to his labours, presented him the money in the name of the convocation. More refused the present, and said with his thanks, that it was no small comfort to him, that men so wise and learned so well accepted his *simple doings*, for which he never intended to receive reward but at the hands of God, to whom their thanks were due.

When no importunity would prevail with him, the bishops besought More that they might present the money to his wife and children. 'Not so my lords,' said the knight. 'I had rather see it cast in the Thames than that either I or any of mine should have thereof the worth of a penny. For although your offer, my lords, be indeed very friendly and honourable, yet set I so little by my profit and so much by my pleasure, that I would not in good faith have lost the watching of so many nights for much more than your liberal offer. And yet wish would I, for all that, upon condition that all heresies were suppressed, that all my books were burnt and my labour lost.'*

The reformers circulated a report from this circumstance, that More was bribed by the clergy, the greater part of

* Roper.

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whom he certainly far surpassed in knowledge, to write against them.*

In his writings, Sir Thomas hath the following passage on this subject. 'I will not say nay, but that some good and honourable men of them (the clergy) would, in reward of my good will and my labour against these heretics, have given me much more than ever I did or could deserve. But I dare take God and them also to record, that all they could never fee me with one penny thereof; but, as I plainly told them, I would rather have cast their money into the Thames than take it. For albeit they were, as indeed there were, both good men and honourable, yet look I for my thank of God that is their better, and for whose sake I take the labour and not for theirs.——I am not yet fully so virtueless, but that of mine own natural disposition, without any special peculiar help of grace thereto, I am both over-proud and over-slothful also, to be hired *for money*, to take half the labour and business in writing, that I have taken in this gear (matter) since I began.' †

Soon after his entry upon his office of chancellor, Henry again importuned More upon the subject of the divorce. The knight, saith Mr. Roper, fell on his knees and besought his majesty to remain the gracious sovereign he had ever found him. Nothing had been so grievous to him as his inability to serve his majesty in that matter with a safe conscience, having ever borne in mind his majesty's words

* More. † Eng. works, p. 867.

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on his entry into his service, the most virtuous lesson which prince ever taught his servant, *first to look unto God, and after God unto him.*

Henry answered, continues Roper, that if More could not conscientiously serve him in that matter, he was content to accept the knight's services in other ways, and to take the advice of others of his council whose consciences did not revolt at it; that he would continue his favour toward the knight, and never more molest his conscience with that matter. But this language proceeded from Henry's heart as it alway *should have been*, and not, as we shall find, from what it alway *was*.

Dr. Cranmer, fellow of Jesus-college, Cambridge, had remarked by accident in the company of Gardiner, secretary of state, and Fox, the king's almoner, that the readiest way, either to quiet Henry's conscience or to extort the pope's consent to his divorce, would be to consult all the universities of Europe on the question, whose decree the pope must find it very difficult to resist; and Henry, delighted at the idea, swore Cranmer *had got the right sow by the ear*, and immediately took him into his favour. Several universities gave their verdict according to the king's wish without hesitation, and Oxford and Cambridge in time complied also. Clement, however, lying still under the influence of the emperor, persevered in summoning Henry, either in person or by proxy, to appear at Rome. But Henry regarded the citation as an insult; and the earl of

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Wiltshire, father of Ann Boleyn, who bore to the pope his majesty's reasons for not appearing, gave his holiness the affront of refusing the customary salute to his proffered toe.

In a word, More plainly perceived the king's determination to marry Ann Boleyn at all events, and that all his measures and those of his parliament pointed to a breach with the church of Rome, and to an alteration of religion. His office occasioned him to be sent by the king, in company with certain nobles and bishops, from the lords to the commons, to inform them the opinions of the universities; and he was compelled to recite a tale, which certainly afforded him little satisfaction in the telling. But More's contempt of worldly greatness was too strong to allow him to hold the *highest* of stations subject to the violation of his conscience, and it was certainly not improbable, as matters now stood, that he might frequently undergo similar trials. Though he might concur with those who would abbreviate the illegal jurisdiction of the pope in this country, he saw now by the king's designs that *a total rupture* would follow; and he was not inclined to go to that length which the court intended against the catholic cause, not to mention the objections he appeared to have to the divorce.

We shall not wonder then, that More soon applied to his particular friend, the duke of Norfolk, to intercede with Henry, that he might be permitted to resign the seal. A complaint in his breast arising from too strenuous an appli-

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cation to business, was the reason assigned by the knight to the duke, as well as in his letters to his friends, for this resignation; and perhaps those only who are unacquainted with the character of Henry, will blame More for so much dissimulation on the occasion.

But Norfolk knew too well the value of More to the king in the station which he filled, to make such a proposal to his majesty without much importunity from the knight; and Henry knew his worth too well, to listen to it without repeated solicitation. The king's consent was, however, at last obtained, and More waited upon his majesty by appointment, to deliver-up the seal. 1532.

'Which,' continues Mr. Roper, 'as his grace, with thanks and praise for his worthy service in that office, at his hands courteously received, so it pleased his highness farther to say unto him, that for the service which he before had done him, in any suit which he should afterward have unto him which should either concern his *honour* (for that word it pleased his highness to use unto him), or which should appertain unto his profit, he should find his highness a good and gracious lord unto him.'

More's great-grandson adds, perhaps somewhat *feelingly*, 'how true these words proved, let others be judges, when the king not only bestowed not upon him the value of one penny, but took from him and his posterity all that ever he

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had, either given by himself, or left him by his father, or purchased by himself.'

It hath been justly remarked of More, that he descended from his high station with more joy and alacrity than he had ascended to it. He sported with the varieties of his fortune, and neither the pride of high station, nor the melancholy of retreat could disturb his serenity. When his friends discovered sorrow on his descent from grandeur, he laughed at their distress, and made them ashamed of losing a moment's chearfulness from such trivial misfortunes.*

His second wife appears from the following anecdote to have been less of a philosopher than himself on this occasion.

During his chancellorship, one of More's attendants had been in the habit, after the church-service was over, of going to his lady's pew to inform her when the chancellor was gone. The first holiday after the resignation of his office, Sir Thomas came to the pew himself, and, making a low bow, said, *madam, my lord is gone.* His lady at first imagined this to be one of his jests, and took little notice of it; but when he informed her seriously that he had resigned the seal, she was in a passion. The facetious knight called his daughters, and asked if they could espy no fault in their mother's appearance? Being answered in the ne-

* Hume.

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gative, he replied, do ye not perceive that her nose standeth somewhat awry?*

The good lady is reported to have exclaimed with her usual worldly feeling on this occasion, *Tilli vally, what will you do Mr. More? will you sit and make goslings in the ashes? it is better to rule than to be ruled.* †.

More's first care after the resignation of his office, was, to provide situations for his late attendants. He used all his influence to place these among the nobility and bishops; and next called together his children, whom hitherto he had maintained with their families in his own house, in the manner of an ancient patriarch. Declaring to them that he could not now, as he had done formerly, and still gladly would have done, bear all their expences himself, he asked their advice, what they should do that they might continue to live together, which he much desired?

'When he saw us silent,' continues Mr. Roper, and in that case not ready to shew our opinions unto him, 'then will I,' said he, 'shew my poor mind to ye. I have been brought-up,' quoth he, 'at Oxford, at an inn of the chancery, at Lincoln's-inn, and also in the king's court, and so from the least degree to the highest; and yet have I in yearly revenues at this present left me a little above a hundred pounds by the year: so that now must we hereafter if we like to live together, be contented to become contri-

* Roper. † More.

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butors together. But by my counsel, it shall not be best for us to fall to the lowest fare first. We will not therefore descend to Oxford fare, nor to the fare of New-inn; but we will begin with Lincoln's-inn diet, where many right worshipfuls and of good years do live full well together: Which if we find not ourselves able to maintain the first year, then will we the next year go one step down to New-inn fare, wherewith many an honest man is well-contented. If that exceed our ability too, then we will the next year after descend to Oxford fare, where many grave, learned, and ancient fathers be continually conversant: Which if our power stretch not to maintain neither, then may we yet with bags and wallets go a begging together, and hoping that for pity some good folks will give us their charity, at every man's door to sing *salve regina*, and so still keep company and be merry together.'

'And whereas,' adds Mr. Roper, 'you have heard before, he was by the king, from a very worshipful living, taken into his service, with whom, in all the great and weighty causes that concerned his highness or the realm, he consumed and spent, with painful cares, travails and troubles, as well beyond the seas as within the realm, in effect the whole substance of his life; yet, with all the gain he got thereby (being never wasteful spender thereof) he was not able, after the resignation of his office of the lord chancellor, for the maintenance of himself and such as necessarily belonged unto him, sufficiently to find meat, drink, fuel, and apparel, and such other necessary charges.

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All the land that ever he purchased (which also he purchased before he was lord chancellor) was not, I am well assured, above the value of twenty marks by the year. And after his debts paid, he had not I know (his chain excepted) in gold and silver left him, the worth of one hundred pounds.'

When More's house was afterward searched upon his commitment to the Tower, because it was thought that he was not really so poor as he appeared to be, he told his daughter Margaret that this would prove but a sport to those who knew the truth of his poverty, *unless indeed they should find his wife's gay girdle and her golden beads.**

It was about this time that More's father, Sir John More, died, in extreme old age; having lived to see the summit of his son's prosperity, and departing in time not to witness his severe end. Sir Thomas is said to have displayed the strongest filial affection on this occasion; and the old man breathed his last, comforted by the prayers and embraces of his dear son.†

Little, if any, increase of fortune accrued to More by his father's death. Sir John's last wife, who outlived Sir Thomas about ten years, enjoyed her husband's chief house and lands at Gubbins in Hertfordshire.‡ And in More's Apology, written about this time, he asserts, *as for all the lands and fees that I have in all England, beside such lands*

* More. † Ibid. and Roper. ‡ More.

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*and fees as I have of the gift of the king's most noble grace, is not at this day, nor shall be while my mother-in-law liveth (whose life and good health I pray God long keep and continue) worth yearly to my living, the sum of full fifty pounds.**
Such was More's charity, and his contempt of wealth!

In his Latin works are preserved two letters which More wrote to Erasmus soon after the resignation of his office. They contain some interesting passages which are here translated.

'The thing which I have wished for from a boy, dear Desiderius, which I rejoice in your having ever enjoyed, and myself occasionally,—namely, that being free from public business, I might have some time to devote to God and myself,—that, by the grace of a great and good God, and by the favour of an indulgent prince, I have at last obtained.

'I have not, however, obtained it as I wished. For I wished to reach that last stage of my life in a state, which, though suitable to my age, might yet enable me to enjoy my remaining years healthy and unbroken, free from disease and pain. But it remaineth in the hand of God, whether this wish, perhaps unreasonable, shall be accomplished. Meantime a disorder of I know not what nature hath attacked my breast, by which I suffer less in present pain than in fear of the consequence. For when it had

* Eng. works, p. 667.

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plagued me without abatement some months, the physicians whom I consulted gave their opinion, that the long continuance of it was dangerous, and the speedy cure impossible; but that it must be cured by the gradual alterative effects of time, proper diet and medicine. Neither could they fix the period of my recovery, or ensure me a complete cure at last.

'Considering this, I saw that I must either lay down my office, or discharge my duty in it incompletely. And since I could not discharge that duty without the hazard of my life, and by so doing should lose both life and office, I determined to lose one of them rather than both. Wherefore, that I might consult the public good as well as my own welfare, I entreated of the kindness of my good and great prince, that from the high office with which (as you know) he honoured me by his incredible favour, far above my pretensions, above my hopes, above my wishes, he should now release me, sinking as I was under the weight of it.

'I therefore pray heaven, that God, who alone is able, may repay these favours of his majesty toward me; that the remaining time which he allotteth me may not be spent in inglorious and slothful repose, but that he may give me inclination and strength of body also, to employ it profitably. For, under bad health, I am not equal to anything; nor, my good friend, are we all like Erasmus, that that might be expected from us which God in his kindness seems

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to have granted exclusively to you. For who but yourself could dare to promise what you accomplish?—you, who are not hindered by the inconveniencies of growing age, and, though you be constantly afflicted with such maladies as might sicken and overcome youth and strength, yet cease you not yearly to instruct mankind by your excellent writings, as if age and ill health had robbed you of nothing.

'Certain praters had begun to give it out here, that though I dissembled my sentiments, I gave-up my office unwillingly; but, having set-about my monument, I have not failed to represent the matter as it really was, in my epitaph, that, if anybody could, I might myself confute such insinuations. In appreciating this act, though they could not tax me with falsehood, they acquitted me not of some degree of arrogance. But I preferred this, to letting the other gain credit; certainly not on my own account, who think very little of what men say while God approveth, but since I had written some books in our language in the cause of the faith against certain of our advocates for the most disputed tenets, I conceived that it behoved me to defend the integrity of my character. And that you may know *how arrogantly* I have written, I send you my epitaph, by which you will see with what assurance I leave these men uncomplimented, that they may *the less* say of me what they please.

'I have now waited a due time for suffrages on my

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official conduct, but no one hath yet stepped forward to challenge my integrity. I must thus have been very innocent or very cautious, and if my adversaries will not give me credit for the one they must for the other. The king himself hath declared his sentiments on the subject often in private, and twice in public. For when my successor, a very first-rate personage, took his seat, his majesty commanded the duke of Norfolk, high-treasurer of England, to bear most honourable testimony of me, yea more than my modesty will allow me to repeat, and to say that he dismissed me most unwillingly at my entreaty; and not content with so great a favour, he caused this to be repeated long afterward in his presence, in our assembly of peers and commons called parliament, by my successor, in his first speech, made as is customary on that occasion.'

The monumental inscription above alluded to, was inscribed by More on the south side of the choir of his parish church at Chelsea, soon after the resignation of his office. The remains of his first wife being removed thither, he subjoined the verses, which he had written many years previously.* The original and a translation here follow.

Thomas Morus,
Urbe Londinensi familia non celebri sed honesta natus,
In literis utcunque versatus,
Quum et causas aliquot annos juvenis egisset in foro,
Et in urbe sua pro shyrevo jus dixisset,

* English works.

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Ab invictissimo rege Henrico VIII
(Cui uni regum omnium gloria prius inaudita contigit
Ut FIDEI DEFENSOR,
Qualem et gladio se et calamo vere præstitit,
Merito vocaretur)
Adscitus in aulam est
Delectusque in consilium et creatus eques,
Proquæstor primum, post cancellarius Lancastriæ, tandem Angliæ,
Miro principis favore factus est.
Sed interim in publico regni senatu lectus est orator populi;
Præterea legatus regis nonnunquam fuit, alias alibi,
Postremo vero Cameraci,
Comes et collega junctus principi legationis Cuthberto Tonstallo,
Tum Londinensi mox Dunelemensi episcopo;
Quo viro vix habet orbis hodie quicquam eruditius, prudentius, melius.
Ibi inter summos orbis christiani monarchas rursus refecta fœdera,
Redditamque mundo diu desideratam pacem
Et lætissimus vidit et legatus interfuit.
Quam superi pacem firment faxintque perennem!
In hoc officiorum vel honorum cursu quum ita versaretur
Ut neque princeps optimus operam ejus improbaret
Neque nobilibus esset invisus, nec injucundus populo,
Furibus autem, homicidis, hæreticisque molestus,
Pater ejus tandem, Johannes Morus, eques,
Et in eum judicum ordinem a principe cooptatus qui REGIUS CONSESSUS vocatur,
Homo civilis, suavis, innocens, mitis, misericors, æquus et integer,
Annis quidam gravis sed corpore plusquam pro ætate vivido,
Postquam eo productam sibi vitam vidit
Ut filium videret Angliæ cancellarium,
Satis in terra jam se moratum ratus
Libens migravit in cœlum.
At filius, defuncto patre,
Cui, quamdiu supererat, comparatus et juvenis vocari consueverat
Et ipse quoque sibi videbatur,
Amissum jam patrem requirens

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Et editos ex se liberos quatuor ac nepotes undecim respiciens,
Apud animum suum cæpit persenescere.
Auxit hunc affectum animi
Subsecuta statim, velut appetentis senii signum,
Pectoris valetudo deterior.
Itaque mortalium harum rerum satur,
Quam rem a puero pene semper optaverat,
Ut ultimos aliquot vitæ suæ annos obtineret liberos,
Quibus hujus vitæ negotiis paulatim se subducens
Futuræ possit immortalitatem meditari,
Eam rem tandem (si cœptis annuat Deus)
Indulgentissimi principis incomparabili beneficio
Resignatis honoribus impetravit:
Atque hoc sepulchrum sibi
Quod mortis eum nunquam cessantis adrepere quotidie commonefaceret,
Translatis huc prioris uxoris ossibus,
Extruendum curavit.
Quod ne superstes frustra sibi fecerit
Neve ingruentum trepidus mortem horreat,
Sed desiderio Christi libens oppetat,
Mortemque ut sibi non omnino mortem
Sed januam vitæ felicioris inveniat,
Precibus eum piis, lector optime,
Spirantem precor defunctumque prosequere.

Chara Thomæ jacet hic Joanna uxorcula Mori,
Qui tumulum Aliciæ hunc destino, quique mihi.
Una mihi dedit hoc conjuncta virentibus annis
Me vocet ut puer et trina puella patrem.
Altera privignis (quæ gloria rara novercæ est)
Tam pia quam gnatis vix fuit ulla suis.
Altera sic mecum vixit, sic altera vivit,
Charior incertum est hæc sit an hæc fuerit.

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O! simul O! juncti poteramus vivere nos tres
Quam bene, si fatum religioque sinant!
At societ tumulus, societ nos obsecro cœlum!
Sic mors, non potuit quod dare vita, dabit.

Thomas More,
Born in the city of London, of no distinguished but of an honest family,
Somewhat of a proficient in literature,
When, in his youth he had pleaded at the bar some years
And discharged the office of under-sheriff in that city
He, by the redoubted king Henry VIII
(To whom alone of kings accrued the glory, before unknown,
Of being deservedly entitled
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH,
As indeed he proved himself by the sword as well as the pen,)
Was called to court
Chosen a privy-counsellor, knighted, and made
Sub-treasurer, chancellor of Lancaster, and chancellor of England
In succession, by his king's great kindness.
Meantime he was chosen speaker of the commons
And appointed ambassador to various courts;
Last of all to Cambray,
Being associated with Cuthbert Tonstall, the chief of that embassy,
Then bishop of London and since of Durham,
A man than whom the world can scarcely boast one more learned, wiser, or better.
There he had the pleasure to see and to negociate
The renewal of the leagues between the chief princes of christendom
And the restoration to the world of long-wished-for peace.
Which peace may heaven confirm and long preserve!
When he had so acquitted himself in these duties and honours,
That neither could his good king arraign his conduct
Nor the peers or commons disapprove,
Though he had been severe to thieves, murderers, and heretics,

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At length his father, Sir John More,
Appointed by his majesty a judge of the king's-bench,
A man of courteous and pleasant manners, harmless, gentle, full of compassion, just and uncorrupt,
Old indeed in years, yet fresh for his age in bodily strength,
After living to see his son chancellor of England,
Thinking he had tarried long enough on earth,
Passed willingly to heaven.
The son, on the death of his father,
Compared to whom, while he lived, he was called a young man,
And indeed seemed so to himself,
Wanting now his best parent
And beholding four children of his own and eleven grandchildren,
Began to fancy himself growing old.
And this fancy was strengthened
By the immediate succession of a disorder in his breast,
A symptom as it were of approaching age.
Having then tasted plentifully of this world's pursuits,
The thing which he had wished for from a boy,
That he might enjoy some of his last years free,
And withdrawing himself by degrees from this life's business
Might have leisure to meditate on his future immortality,
That thing at last (if God approve)
By the incomparable kindness of his most indulgent king,
Having resigned his honours, he hath obtained.
And he hath erected this monument,
Having removed hither the remains of his first wife,
As a constant memorial of his ever-approaching death.
That he may not have done this in vain while yet he lived,
That he dread not the approach of death,
But meet it cheerfully from the love of Christ,
And that he find death not his extinction
But the entrance of a happier existence,
Do thou good reader assist him with thy pious prayers
As well now while he liveth as after his decease.

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Here lies my Jane, dear wife of Thomas More,
And here my Alice and myself would lie;
Three girls, a boy, my Jane her partner bore,
With rarest stepdames may my Alice vie.
So bless'd the first my youthful years with love,
So sooths the second my maturer day,
Each seems in vain superior worth to prove
For each divides my heart with equal sway.
Religion's laws had they allow'd, or fate,
Here brac'd in triple concord could we live;
Grant grave, grant heaven that bless'd united state,
And death afford what life could never give!

To the elegant pen of the Reverend Francis Wrangham the reader is indebted for the following additional translation of the verses.

Within this tomb Jane, wife of More, reclines:
This, More for Alice and himself designs.
The first, dear object of my youthful vow,
Gave me three daughters and a son to know;
The next,—ah! virtue in a stepdame rare!
Nursed my sweet infants with a mother's care.
With both my years so happily have past,
Which most my love, I know not—first, or last.
O! had religion, destiny allow'd,
How smoothly, mix'd, had our three fortunes flow'd!
But be we in the tomb, in heaven allied:
So kinder death shall grant, what life denied.

More had now for some years made Chelsea the place of his abode. No less than four houses in that parish have

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laid claim to the honour of his residence; of which, that subsequently belonging to Sir Robert Cecil, and more recently called Beaufort House, appears to have the best pretension. 'A good distance from his house,' says Mr. Roper, 'builded he a place called the New-building, wherein was a chapel, a library, and a gallery.' Mr. More adds, that Sir Thomas built a chapel or chancel in Chelsea-church and furnished it liberally with plate, &c. saying, *good men give it and bad men take it away.* This is said to have been the south chancel; in the east window of which, his arms remained until it was repaired about eighty years ago. He also hired a house for the aged, in this parish, and supported them; delegating to his favourite daughter, Margaret, the office of seeing that their wants were supplied.*

Before we leave this period of More's chancellorship, it will be proper to advert to the allegation made, of his furious zeal while in office in persecuting heterodoxy.

Of our martyrologist Fox, it hath been justly said, that neither his facts nor his temper are to be relied upon. His relations of More are, however, followed by Burnet and Strype; and Mr. Hume, in a later day, following these authorities, hath told us that Sir Thomas, though adorned with the gentlest manners and the purest integrity, carried to the utmost height his aversion to heterodoxy. This man, saith the historian, whose elegant genius and familiar ac-

* More.

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quaintance with the noble spirit of antiquity had given him very enlarged sentiments, and who had in his early years advanced principles which even at present would be deemed somewhat too free, had in the course of events been so irritated by polemics, and thrown into such a supersitious attachment to the ancient faith, that few inquisitors have been guilty of greater violence in their persecution of heresy.

Zeal for religion hath, it is true, been able in many instances to render the sweetest dispositions ferocious, nay, to make man worse by grace than he was by nature; and the religion in which More had been educated, the ignorance and superstition, with the usual progress of men's sentiments, during the age in which he lived, might, had he not himself given the lie to these calumnies, have been adduced at this day in extenuation of his conduct. There were moreover so many of corrupt minds and evil principles, who abused the reformation to serve their own vilest purposes, that it is not to be wondered at if More, as well as others, entertained strong prejudices against it. Germany was a scene of uproar, the commonalty acting as if all was their own, and plundering whoever they pleased. Who knows not, exclaims the good Erasmus, how many light and seditious ones are ready, on this pretence of reformation, to break loose in every kind of crime, had not the severity of power restrained their temerity? Were it not for this check, the pseudo-gospellers had long since broken into the cellars and cabinets of the rich, and every one would have proved a papist who had any thing to lose.

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But what will a candid reader require from a man of More's acknowledged integrity, stronger than the following curious assertions in his own behalf, to be found in the 36th chapter of his Apology, printed in his English works? with which we will conclude the present chapter, for they seem to need no comment.

'The lies are neither few nor small, which many of the blessed brethren have made, and daily yet make by me. Divers of them have said, that, of such as were in my house while I was chancellor, I used to examine them with torments, causing them to be bounden to a tree in my garden and there piteously beaten. And this tale had some of those good brethren so caused to be blown about, that a right-worshipful friend of mine did of late, within less than this fortnight, tell unto another near friend of mine, that he had of late heard much speaking thereof.

'What cannot these brethren say who can be so shameless to say thus? For, of very truth, albeit that for a great robbery, or an heinous murder, or sacrilege in a church, with carrying away the pix with the blessed sacrament, or villanously casting it out, I caused sometimes such things to be done by some officers of the Marshalsea, or of some other prisons —— with which ordering of them, by their well deserved pain, and without any great hurt that afterward should stick by them, I found-out and repressed many such desperate wretches as else had not failed to have gone farther abroad, and to have done to many good folk

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a great deal much more harm —— yet though I so did in thieves, murderers, and robbers of churches, and notwithstanding also that heretics be yet much worse than all they, yet, saving only their sure keeping, I never did else cause any such thing to be done to any of them all, in all my life, except only twain.

'Of which the one was a child, and a servant of mine in mine own house; whom his father had, ere ever he came with me, nursed-up in such matters, and had set him to attend upon George Jay —— This George Jay did teach this child his ungracious heresy against the blessed sacrament of the altar. Which heresy, this child afterward, being in service with me, began to teach another child in my house, who uttered his counsel. And, upon that point perceived and known, I caused a servant of mine to stripe him, like a child, before mine household, for amendment of himself and example of such other.

'Another was one, who after that he had fallen into those frantic heresies, fell soon after into plain open frenzy beside. And albeit that he had therefore been put-up in Bedlam, and afterward, by beating and correction, gathered his remembrance to him and began to come again to himself, being thereupon set at liberty, and walking about abroad, his old fancies began to fall again in his head. And I was from divers good holy places advertised, that he used, in his wandering about, to come into the church, and there make many mad toys and trifles, to the trouble of good

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people in the divine service. And specially would he be most busy in the time of most silence, while the priest was at the secrets of the mass. And if he spied any woman kneeling at a form, if her head hung anything low in her meditations, then would he steal behind her, and if he were not letted, would labour to lift-up all her clothes and cast them quite over her head.

'Whereupon, I being advertised of these pageants, and being sent unto and required by very devout, religious folk, to take some other order with him, caused him, as he came wandering by my door, to be taken by the constables and bounden to a tree in the street, before the whole town; and there they striped him with rods therefore, till he waxed weary, and somewhat longer. And it appeared well that his remembrance was good enough, save that it went about in grazing till it was beaten home. For he could then very well rehearse his faults himself, and speak and treat very well, and promise to do afterward as well. And verily, God be thanked! I hear none harm of him now.

'And of all who ever came in my hand for heresy, as help me God! saving, as I said, the sure keeping of them (and yet not so sure neither, but that George Constantine could steal away), else had never any of them any stripe or stroke given them, so much as a fillip on the forehead.

* * * * * * * * * * *

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'And now dare I say, that if this pacifier had by experience known the truth of that kind of people, he would not have given so much credence to their lamentable complainings —— Howbeit, what faith my words will have with him, in these mine own causes, I can not very surely say; nor yet very greatly care. And yet stand I not in so much doubt of myself, but that I trust well, that among many good and honest men (among which sort of folk I trust I may reckon him), mine own word would alone, even in mine own cause, be somewhat better believed, than would the oaths of some twain of this new brotherhood in a matter of another man.'

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CHAP. IV.

More's anticipation of his fate.... He withdraws from public business.... His remark on Henry's second marriage, and advice to Cromwell.... His behaviour to the bishops.... Malignant scrutiny on his conduct.... The nun of Kent.... More's letter to Cromwell, and a curious anecdote.... More accused of misprision of treason.... Conduct of the committee for examining him.... More's firmness.... His letter to the king.... He is accused of ingratitude.... His reply.... Anecdote on his return home.... The king's conduct.... More's name erased from the bill.... Acts passed in parliament.... Henry's triumph in his new titles.... Opinions of the Romish party, and of their adversaries.... More refuseth the oath of succession.... He is cited to appear at Lambeth.... His foreboding, and letter to his daughter.... Cranmer's argument, and his curious letter.... More and Fisher committed to the Tower, and attainted.... More's sentiments on the king's marriage, and the pope's primacy.

His voluntary resignation of this world's dignity was the signal for More's rapid declension from his high elevation, to the lowest point of this world's misery; and, his acquaintance with Henry's character enabled him to anticipate the troubles of his latter days long before their event.

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'He would talk,' says Mr. Roper, 'unto his wife and children of the joys of heaven and pains of hell, of the lives of holy martyrs, of their grievous martyrdoms, of their marvellous patience, and of their passions and deaths; which they suffered rather than they would offend God. And what a happy and blessed thing it was, for the love of God to suffer the loss of goods, imprisonment, loss of lands, and life also.—Wherewith, and the like virtuous talk, he had so long before his trouble encouraged them, that when he afterward fell into trouble indeed, his trouble was to them a great deal the less.'

When he resigned his office, More withdrew his attention entirely from public affairs, and devoted himself to prayer and to his writings. He lessened his establishment, sold a part of his effects, and sent his children to their own houses. He is said to have passed many sleepless nights in the anticipation of his fate, and to have prayed with fervour for courage under it,—for his flesh, he said, *could not endure a fillip*. He once went so far as to hire a pursuivant to come on a sudden at dinner-time to his house, and, knocking hastily at the door, to summon him before the council the next day. This was to prepare his family for what they had to expect.*

When the king married Ann Boleyn, *God give grace son*, said Sir Thomas to Mr. Roper, *that these matters within a while be not confirmed with oaths.*

* More.

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One day when Thomas Cromwell came to him at Chelsea with a message from the king, More said to him, 'Mr. Cromwell you are now entered into the service of a most noble, wise, and liberal prince. If you will follow my poor advice, you shall in your counsel-giving to his grace, ever tell him what he ought to do, but never what he is able to do; so shall you shew yourself a true, faithful servant, and a right worthy counsellor. For, if a lion knew his own strength, hard were it for any man to rule him.'* More's great-grandson adds, that Cromwell never learned this lesson, for he advised Henry *as he thought would please him.*

Shortly before the new queen's coronation, More received a letter from the bishops of Durham, Bath, and Winchester, requesting him to keep them company from the Tower to the coronation at Westminster, and to accept of £20 which they sent at the same time to buy him a gown. More received the money but remained at home, and told their lordships when he saw them, that as he had complied with one of their requests, he was the bolder in refusing the other.

Their conduct, he added, put him in mind of an emperor who made a law, that whoever committed a certain offence, unless the offender was a virgin, should suffer death. Now it happened that the first offender was a virgin, and the emperor was in some perplexity how to act, for he wished to enforce his law. When his council had debated the

* Roper.

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matter for some time, a good, plain man arose and said, why make ye so much ado my lords about so small a matter?—let her be first deflowered and thereafter may she be devoured. ‘ And so though your lordships,’ continued the knight, ‘ have in the matter of the matrimony hitherto kept yourselves pure virgins, yet take good heed my lords that ye keep your virginity still. For some there be who, by procuring your lordships first at the coronation to be present, and next to preach for the setting-forth of it, and finally to write books to all the world in defence thereof, are desirous to deflower ye; and when they have deflowered ye, then will they not fail soon after to devour ye. Now, my lords, it lieth not in my power but that they may devour me, but, God being my good Lord, I will so provide that they shall never deflower me.’*

It hath been conjectured that these words were reported to the queen, and that she incensed her consort against More. But it is perhaps more probable, that considering his great weight and influence in the kingdom, and perceiving that no persuasions were likely to move the knight to favour the divorce, the bad part of Henry's disposition began now to prevail, and that he determined to adopt harsher measures against More, which led in the end to one of the deepest stains in his reign.

At least malignant scrutiny appears from this time to have been exercised with diligence, in discovering some

* Roper.

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ground of accusation against him. In his English works is preserved a letter from More to Thomas Cromwell, vindicating himself against a false report which had been circulated, that he had written an answer to the king's justification of his appeal from the pope. But Elizabeth Barton, commonly called the Holy maid of Kent, her ravings and revelations, soon afforded the enemies of More a fairer occasion for the exercise of their malignity. A curious letter from More to Cromwell, which throws the strongest light upon this subject, and which was probably written for the king's eye, hath been preserved, and is here presented to the reader as affording an authentic history of the transaction.

Sir Thomas More to Mr. Thomas Cromwell.

Right Worshipful,

'After my most hearty recommendation, with like thanks for your goodness in accepting of my rude long letter,—I perceive that of your farther goodness and favour toward me, it liked your mastership to break with my son Roper, of that that I had had communication, not only with divers who were of acquaintance with the lewd nun of Canterbury, but also with herself; and had over that, by my writing declaring favour toward her, given her advice and counsel. Of which my demeanor, that it liketh you to be content to take the labour and the pain to hear, by mine own writing, the truth, I very heartily thank you, and reckon myself therein right deeply beholden to you.

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'It is, I suppose, about eight or nine years ago since I heard of that housewife first. At which time the bishop of Canterbury that then was (God absolve his soul!) sent unto the king's grace a roll of paper, in which were written certain words of hers, which she had, as report was then made, at sundry times spoken in her trances. Whereupon it pleased the king's grace to deliver me the roll, commanding me to look thereon and afterward shew him what I thought therein. Whereunto at another time, when his highness asked me, I told him, that in good faith I found nothing in those words that I could anything regard or esteem. For, seeing that some part fell in rhythm, and *that* God wots full rude also! for any reason God wots! that I saw therein, a right simple woman might, in my mind, speak it of her own wit well enough. Howbeit, I said, that because it was constantly reported for a truth that God wrought in her, and that a miracle was shewed upon her, I durst not, nor would not be bold in judging the matter. And the king's grace, as methought esteemed the matter as light, as it after proved lewd.

'From that time till about christmas was twelvemonth, albeit that continually there was much talking of her and of her holiness, yet never heard I any talk rehearsed either of revelation of hers or miracle; saving that I heard say, divers times, in my lord cardinal's days, that she had been both with his lordship and with the king's grace. But what she said, either to the one or to the other, upon my faith I had never heard any one word.

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'Now, as I was about to tell you, about christmas was twelvemonth, father Risby, friar observant, then of Canterbury, lodged one night at my house. Where, after supper, a little before he went to his chamber, he fell in communication with me of the nun; giving her high commendation of holiness, and that it was wonderful to see and undersand the works which God wrought in her. Which thing, I answered, that I was very glad to hear it, and thanked God thereof. Then he told me that she had been with my lord legate in his life, and with the king's grace too. And that she had told my lord legate a revelation of hers, of three swords which God had put in my lord legate's hand; which if he ordered not well, God would lay it sore to his charge. The first, she said, was the ordering the spirituality under the pope as legate; the second, the rule that he bore in order of the temporality under the king as his chancellor; and the third, she said, was the meddling he was put in trust with by the king, concerning the great matter of his marriage. And therewithal I said unto him, that any revelation of the king's matters I would not hear of; I doubted not but the goodness of God should direct his highness with his grace and wisdom, that the thing should take such end as God should be pleased with, to the king's honour and surety of the realm. When he heard me say these words or the like, he said unto me, that God had specially commanded her to pray for the king. And forthwith he brake again into her revelations concerning the cardinal,—that his soul was saved by her mediation; and without any other communication, went unto his chamber. And he

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and I never talked any more of any such manner of matter. Nor, since his departing on the morrow, I never saw him after, to my remembrance, till I saw him at Paul's cross.

'After this, about shrovetide, there came unto me, a little before supper, father Rich, friar observant of Richmond. And as we fell in talking, I asked him of father Risby how he did? And upon that occasion he asked me, whether father Risby had any thing shewed me of the holy nun of Kent. And I said *yea*, and that I was very glad to hear of her virtue. *I would not*, quoth he, *tell you again that you have heard of him already; but I have heard and known many great graces which God hath wrought in her, and in other folk by her, which I would gladly tell you if I thought you had not heard them already.* And therewith he asked me, whether father Risby had told me any thing of her being with my lord cardinal? And I said *yea. Then he told you*, quoth he, *of the three swords. Yea verily*, quoth I. *Did he tell you*, quoth he, *of the revelations which she had concerning the king's grace? Nay forsooth*, quoth I, *nor if he would have done, I would not have given him the hearing; nor verily no more I would indeed; for since she hath been with the king's grace herself and told him, methought it a thing needless to tell me or to any man else.* And when father Rich perceived that I would not hear her revelations concerning the king's grace, he talked on a little of her virtue, and let her revelations alone. And therewith my supper was set upon the board, where I required him

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to sit with me; but he would in nowise tarry, but departed to London.

'After that night I talked with him twice; once in mine own house, another time in his own garden at the friars. At every time a great space, but not of any revelations touching the king's grace; but only of other mean folk I know not whom, of which things some were very strange and some were very childish. But albeit that he said he had seen her lie in her trance in great pains, and that he had at other times taken great spiritual comfort in her communication, yet did he never tell me that she had told him those tales herself. For if he had, I would for the tale o. Mary Magdalen which he told me, and for the tale of the host with which, as I have heard, she said she was houseled at the king's mass at Calais, if I had heard it of him as told unto himself by her mouth for a revelation, I would have both liked him and her the worse. But whether ever I heard the same tale of Rich or of Risby, or of neither of them both, but of some other man since she was in hold, in good faith I cannot tell. But I wot well when or wheresoever I heard it, methought it a tale too marvellous to be true; and very likely that she had told some man her dream who told it out for a revelation. And in effect I little doubted, but that some of these tales which were told of her were untrue. But yet, since I never heard them reported as spoken by her own mouth, I thought nevertheless that many of them might be true, and she a very virtuous woman too. As some lies be peradventure written of some who be saints

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in heaven, and yet many miracles indeed done by them for all that.

'After this, I being upon a day at Sion, and talking with divers of the fathers together at the grate, they shewed me that she had been with them, and shewed me divers things which some of them misliked in her. And in this talking, they wished that I had spoken with her, and said they would fain see how I should like her. Whereupon, afterward when I heard that she was there again, I came thither to see her and to speak with her myself. At which communication, had in a little chapel, there were none present but we two. In the beginning whereof I shewed, that my coming to her was not of any curious mind anything to know, of such things as folk talked that it pleased God to reveal and shew unto her. But for the great virtue which I had heard so many years, every day more and more, spoken and reported of her, I therefore had a great mind to see her and be acquainted with her, that she might have somewhat the more occasion to remember me to God in her devotion and prayers. Whereunto she gave me a very good, virtuous answer; that, as God did of his goodness far better by her than she a poor wretch was worthy, so she feared that many folk yet beside that spoke, of their own favourable minds, many things for her far above the truth. And that of me she had many such things heard, that already she prayed for me and ever would. Whereof I heartily thanked her.

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'I said unto her, *Madam, one Hellen, a maiden dwelling about Tottenham, of whose trances and revelations there hath been much talking, she hath been with me of late, and shewed me that she was with you; and that, after the rehearsal of such visions as she had seen, you shewed her that they were no revelations, but plain illusions of the devil, and advised her to cast them out of her mind. And verily she gave therein good credence unto you, and thereupon hath left to lean any longer unto such visions of her own. Whereupon she saith, she findeth your words true; for ever since, she hath been the less visited with such things as she was wont to be before.* To this she answered me,—*Forsooth sir, there is in this point no praise unto me, but the goodness of God as it appeareth hath wrought much meekness in her soul, which hath taken my rude warning so well and not grudged to hear her spirit and her visions reproved.* I liked her in good faith better for this answer, than for many of these things that I heard reported by her. Afterward she told me upon that occasion, how great need folk have who are visited with such visions, to take heed and prove well of what spirit they come of. And in that communication she told me, that of late the devil, in likeness of a bird, was flying and fluttering about her in a chamber, and suffered himself to be taken. And being in hands, suddenly changed in their sight who were present, into such a strange ugly-fashioned bird, that they were all afraid and threw him out at a window.

'For conclusion —— we talked no word of the king's

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grace or any great personage else, nor in effect of any man or woman but of herself and myself. But after no long communication had (for ere ever we met my time came to go home), I gave her a double-ducat, and prayed her to pray for me and mine, and so departed from her and never spake with her after. Howbeit, of a truth, I had a great good opinion of her and had her in great estimation, as you shall perceive by the letter which I wrote unto her. For afterward—because I had often heard that many right worshipful folks, as well men as women, used to have much communication with her; and many folk are of nature inquisitive and curious, whereby they fall sometimes into such talking, that better were it to forbear, of which thing I nothing thought while I talked with her of charity —— therefore I wrote her a letter thereof. Which, since it may be peradventure that she brake or lost, I shall insert the very copy thereof in this present letter. These were the very words;

Good Madam and my right dearly-beloved Sister in our Lord God!

'After most hearty commendation, I shall beseech you to take my good mind in good worth; and pardon me that I am so homely, as of myself, unrequired, and also without necessity, to give counsel to you; of whom, for the good inspirations and great revelations, which it liketh Almighty God of his goodness to give and shew (as many wise, well-learned, and very virtuous folk testify), I myself have need, for the comfort of my soul, to require and ask ad-

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vice. For surely, good madam, since it pleaseth God sometimes to suffer such as are far under, and of little estimation, to give yet fruitful advertisement to such others as are in the light of the spirit so far above them, that there were between them no comparison (as he suffered his high prophet Moses to be in some things advised and counselled by Jethro), I cannot, for the love which in our Lord I bear you, refrain to put you in remembrance of one thing, which in my poor mind I think highly necessary to be by your wisdom considered, referring the end and the order thereof to God and his holy spirit to direct you. Good madam I doubt not but that you remember, that in the beginning of my communication with you, I shewed you that I neither was nor would be curious, of any knowledge of other men's matters. And least of all of any matter of princes or of the realm. In case it so were that God had, as to many good folks beforetime he hath, any time revealed unto you such things, I said unto your ladyship that I was not only not desirous to hear of, but also *would not hear of them.*

'Now madam I consider well, that many folk desire to speak with you, who are not all peradventure of my mind in this point. But some hap to be curious and inquisitive of things which little pertain unto their parts; and some might peradventure hap to talk of such things as might peradventure afterward turn to much harm. As I think you have heard how the late duke of Buckingham was moved with the fame of one who was reported for an holy

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monk, and had such talking with him as afterward was a great part of his destruction and disheriting of his blood, and great slander and infamy of religion. It sufficeth me, good madam, to put you in remembrance of such things. As I nothing doubt, your wisdom and the spirit of God shall keep you from talking with any person (specially with high persons), of any such manner of things as pertain to prince's affairs, or the state of the realm. But only to commune and talk with any person, high and low, of such manner of things, as may to the soul be profitable for you to shew, and for them to know.

'And thus, my good lady and dearly-beloved sister in our Lord, I make an end of this my needless advertisement unto you: Whom the blessed Trinity preserve and increase in grace; and put in your mind, to recommend me and mine unto him in your devout prayers. At Chelsea, this Tuesday, by the hand of

Your hearty-loving brother and bedesman,

THOMAS MORE, Kt.

'At the receipt of this letter, she answered my servant, that she heartily thanked me. Soon after this, there came to mine house, the prior of the charterhouse at Shene, and one Brother Williams with him. Who nothing talked to me, but of her and of the great joy that they took in her virtue; but of any of her revelations they had no communication But at another time Brother Williams came

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to me and told me a long tale, of her being at the house of a knight in Kent who was sore-troubled with temptations to destroy himself. And none other thing we talked of, nor should have done of likelihood though we had tarried together much longer, he took so great pleasure, good man! to tell the tale with all the circumstances at length.

'When I came again another day to Sion, on a day in which there was a profession, some of the fathers asked me how I liked the nun? And I answered, that in good faith I liked her very well in her talking; *howbeit*, quoth I, *she is never the nearer tried by that: For I assure ye, she were likely to be very bad, if she seemed good, ere I should think her other, till she happened to be proved naught.* And in good faith that is my manner indeed, except I were set to search and examine the truth upon likelihood of some cloaked evil. For in that case, although I nothing suspected the person myself, yet, no less than if I suspected him sore, I would, as far as my wit would serve me, search to find out the truth; as yourself hath done very prudently in this matter. Wherein you have done, in my mind to your great laud and praise, a very meritorious deed, in bringing-forth to light such detestable hypocrisy. Whereby every other wretch may take warning, and be feared to set-forth their own devilish-dissembled falsehood, under the manner and colour of the wonderful work of God. For verily this woman so handled herself with help of that evil spirit who inspired her, that, after her own confession declared at Paul's-cross, when I sent word by my servant unto the prior of

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the charterhouse that she was undoubtedly proved a false, deceiving hypocrite, the good man had had so good opinion of her so long, that he could at the first scantly believe me therein. Howbeit, it was not he alone who thought her so very good, but many another right good man beside; as little marvel was, upon so good report, till she was proved naught.'

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * †

A curious anecdote attends this letter. When More's English works were printed by order of queen Mary, this letter was concealed, though not destroyed. It was resolved, it seems, to raise the credit of the nun's story, who, being acknowledged a martyr as well as a prophetess, might perhaps have obtained canonization; and it was judged imprudent, no doubt, to leave so high a testimony as this from More in her way.

1534. The session of parliament holden early in 1534, passed an act of attainder against some who were engaged in this imposture. Elizabeth herself, and several others, suffered for their crime; while Fisher and others were condemned for misprision of treason, because they had not discovered what they heard from Elizabeth.

More's name was at first included in the latter bill, and

† Burnet ex M.S.S. Norfolc.

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Mr. Roper informs us that the knight solicited to be himself heard by the king in his own defence. Henry, however, appointed the archbishop of Canterbury, the chancellor, the duke of Norfolk and Cromwell to examine him; and when Mr. Roper advised More with anxiety to use his interest with these commissioners to obtain his discharge from the bill, he answered *he would.*

The committee, however, soon threw-off the mask, and proved plainly enough by their proceedings, that the affair of the nun was merely *a handle* on this occasion. For instead of insisting on that point, the chancellor began by recapitulating to More the king's favours, adding, that he could ask no worldly promotion which would be denied him, and hoping, in conclusion, that this view of his majesty's affection toward him, would induce the knight to recompence the king in his turn, and to add his consent to *what the parliament, the bishops, and the universities had already passed.*

More, continues Mr. Roper, mildly replied,—' No man living is there my lords, who would with better will do the thing which should be acceptable to the king's highness, than I; who must needs confess, his manifold goodness and bountiful benefits, most liberally bestowed on me. Howbeit I verily hoped, I should never have heard of this matter more; considering that I have from time to time, alway from the beginning, so plainly and truly declared my mind unto his grace, which his highness ever seemed to me,

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like a most gracious prince, very well to accept, never minding, as he said, to molest me more therewith. Since which time, any farther thing which was able to move me to any change could I never find. And if I could, there is none in all the world who would have been gladder of it than I.'

The knight had likewise addressed to his majesty the following letter relative to the affair of the nun; in which it seemeth that he thought it advisable to hold his king in remembrance of what his majesty had formerly promised as to the knight's honour.

Sir Thomas More to King Henry VIII.

'It may like your highness to call to your gracious remembrance, that at such time as, of the great weighty room and office of your chancellor (with which, so far above my merits or qualities able and meet therefore, your highness had of your incomparable goodness honoured and exalted me), you were so good and gracious unto me, as at my poor humble suit to discharge and disburden me, giving me licence with your gracious favour, to bestow the residue of my life to come about the provision for my soul in the service of God, and to be your bedesman and pray for you —— it pleased your highness farther to say unto me, that for the service which I before had done you (which it then liked your goodness far above my deserving to commend), that in any suit which I should after have to your grace, which either should concern mine *honour* (the word

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it liked your highness to use unto me), or that should pertain unto my profit, I should find your highness a good and gracious lord unto me.

'So is it now, gracious sovereign, that worldly honour is the thing whereof I have resigned both the possession and the desire, in the resignation of your most honourable office. And worldly profit, I trust experience proveth, and daily more and more shall prove, that I never was very greedy thereof.

'But now is my most humble suit unto your excellent highness, to beseech the same somewhat to tender my poor honesty. Howbeit principally, that of your accustomed goodness, no sinister information move your noble grace, to have any more distrust of my truth and devotion toward you, than I have or shall during my life give cause. For in this matter of the nun of Canterbury, I have unto your trusty counsellor Mr. Thomas Cromwell, by my writing, as plainly declared the truth as I possibly can. Which my declaration, of his duty toward your grace and his goodness toward me, he hath, I understand, declared unto your grace. In any part of all which my dealing, whether any other man may peradventure put any doubt or move any scruple of suspicion, that can I neither tell, nor lieth it in my hand to let. But unto myself it is not possible any part of my said demeanour to seem *evil*, the very clearness of mine own conscience knoweth in all that matter my mind and intent so *good*.

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'Wherefore, most gracious sovereign, I neither will, nor yet can it well become me, with your highness to reason or argue that matter; but in my most humble manner, prostrate at your gracious feet, I only beseech your grace, with your own high prudence and your accustomed goodness, consider and weigh the matter. And if that in your so doing, your *own* virtuous mind shall give you, that notwithstanding the manifold and excellent goodness that your gracious highness hath by so many manner of ways used unto me, I were a wretch of such a monstrous ingratitude, as could with any of them all, or any other person living, digress from my bounden duty of allegiance toward your good grace, then desire I no farther favour at your gracious hand, than the loss of all that ever I may lose, goods, lands, liberty, and finally my life withal. Whereof the keeping of any part unto myself could never do me a pennyworth of pleasure; but only should my comfort be, that after my short life and your long (which, with continual prosperity to God's pleasure, our Lord of his mercy send you!), I should once meet your grace again in heaven, and there be merry with you. Where among mine other pleasures, this should yet be one; that your grace should surely see there then, that howsoever you take me, I am your true bedeman now, and ever have been, and will be till I die, howsoever your pleasure be to do by me.

'Howbeit, if in the considering of my cause, your high wisdom and gracious goodness perceive (as I verily trust in God you shall), that I none otherwise have demeaned my-

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self than well may stand with my bounden duty of faithfulness toward your royal majesty; then in my most humble wise I beseech your most noble grace, that the knowledge of your true gracious persuasion in that behalf may relieve the torment of my present heaviness (conceived of the dread and fear, by that I hear such a grievous bill put by your learned counsel into your high court of parliament against me)—lest your grace might, by some sinister information, be moved any thing to think the contrary.

'Which if your highness do not, as I trust in God and your great goodness, the matter by your own high prudence examined and considered, you will not; then in my most humble manner I beseech your highness farther —— albeit that in respect of my former request this other thing is very slight; yet since your highness hath herebefore, of your more abundant goodness, heaped and accumulated upon me, though I was thereto far unworthy, from time to time, both worship and great honour too; since I now have left all such things, and nothing seek or desire but the life to come, and pray for your grace the while —— it may like your highness of your accustomed benignity, somewhat to tender my poor honesty; and never suffer, by the mean of such a bill put-forth against me, any man to take occasion hereafter against the truth to slander me. Who should yet, by the peril of their own souls, do themselves more hurt than me; who shall, I trust, settle my heart, with your gracious favour, to depend upon the comfort of the truth

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and hope of heaven, and not upon the fallible opinion, or soon-spoken words, of light and soon-changeable people.

'And thus, most dread and most dear sovereign lord, I beseech the blessed Trinity preserve your most noble grace both body and soul, and all who are your well-willers, and amend all the contrary. Among whom, if ever I be, or ever have been one, then pray I God, that he may with mine open shame and destruction declare it.'*

When the committee found that no persuasions would move More in the determination he had made, they had recourse to threats, and told him that the king had ordered, if gentleness would not win him, that in his name they should charge him with ingratitude,—*that never was there servant to his sovereign so villanous, nor subject to his prince so traiterous, as he. For he, by subtle, sinister slights, most unnaturally procuring and provoking him to set-forth a book of the assertion of the seven sacraments and maintenance of the pope's authority, had caused him, to his dishonour throughout all christendom, to put a sword in the pope's hand to fight against himself.*†

'My lords,' replied More, 'these terrors be arguments for children and not for me. But to answer to that, wherewith ye do chiefly burden me,—I believe the king's highness, of his honour, will never lay that to my charge; for

* Eng. works. † Roper.

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none is there who can in that point say in my excuse more than his highness himself. Who right well knoweth, that I was never procurer nor counsellor of his majesty thereunto, but after it was finished, by his grace's appointment, and consent of the maker's of the same, I was only a sorter-out and placer of the principal matters therein contained. Wherein when I found the pope's authority highly advanced, and with strong arguments mightily defended, I said unto his grace, *I must put your highness in remembrance of one thing, and that is this. The pope, as your grace knoweth, is a prince as you are, and in league with all other christian princes. It may so hereafter fall-out, that your grace and he may vary upon some points of leagues, whereupon may grow breach of amity and war between ye both. I think it best therefore that that place be amended, and his authority more slenderly touched.*

'*Nay,*' quoth his grace, '*that shall it not. We are so much bounden to the see of Rome, that we cannot do too much honour to it.*

'Then did I farther put him in remembrance of the statute of premunire, whereby a good part of the pope's pastoral cure here was pared away. To that answered his highness, *whatsoever impediment be to the contrary, we will set-forth that authority to the uttermost, for we receive from that see our crown imperial;* which I never heard-of before till his grace told it me with his own mouth. So that I trust, when his grace shall be once truly informed of this, and

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call to his gracious remembrance my doings in that behalf, his highness will never speak of it more, but clear me therein thoroughly himself.'——*And thus displeasantly departed they*, adds Mr. Roper.

More now took boat for Chelsea and was very merry by the way. Mr. Roper rejoicing to see him so, hoped he was discharged from the bill. When they reached Chelsea, they walked together in the garden, and Mr. Roper observed, *I trust sir that all is well, because that you be so merry.*

It is so indeed son Roper, I thank God! answered the knight.

Are you then put-out of the parliament bill?——

By my truth, son Roper, I never remembered it.——

Never remembered it! a cause that toucheth yourself so near, and us all for your sake! I am sorry to hear it; for I verily trusted when I saw you so merry, that all had been well.

Wilt thou know, son Roper, why I was so merry?

That would I gladly, sir.——

In good faith I rejoiced, son, that I had given the devil a

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foul fall; and that with those lords I had gone so far, as without great shame I could never go back again.

Henry, as might be expected, was highly offended with More for what was little less than charging him with a deliberate falsehood, and in his unjust revenge he said the bill regarding the nun *should* proceed against the knight. The chancellor and other lords replied, the upper-house was so bent on hearing him in his own defence, that *it were best* to rescind his name from the bill. Henry was, however, too much bent on carrying his point, not to reject this proposal. He was too haughty to submit to a subject with whom he had entered the lists, and too revengeful to forgive a man who had been his favourite and yet had dared to offend him. After a good deal of bouncing, he said he would himself be present in the house when the bill should pass; imagining, no doubt, that the parliament stood so much in awe of him, that the lords would not dare in his presence to reject it.

The committee of council, however, were of a different opinion. They feared, or pretended to fear, the talents and eloquence of Sir Thomas, which were superior and commanding; nor did they deem it prudent to hazard his appearance to plead in his own defence, whose virtues and amiable conduct had prejudiced so many in his favour before he spoke.*

* Roper and Warner.

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But the more they pressed Henry to give way, the haughtier he grew in insisting on his point. Whether they really apprehended a defeat, or whether they contended with the king in this manner from the personal friendship they had for Sir Thomas, it is difficult to say. If we recollect the tyranny with which Henry treated his parliaments we shall perhaps ascribe their arguments to the latter cause, or to the apprehension of the people's clamour if he was attainted as the accomplice of so weak an impostor.

Audley and the rest (says Mr. Roper) at last besought Henry *on their knees*, to forbear; adding, *they mistrusted not, in time, against him to find some meet matter to serve the king's turn better. For in this cause of the nun he was accounted so innocent and clear, that for his dealings therein, men reckoned him far worthier of praise than of reproof.*

Henry at length complied; and Cromwell meeting Mr. Roper on the morrow, desired him to tell More, that his name was erased from the bill. When the knight heard this from Mrs. Roper, *in faith Megg*, he said, *quod differtur non aufertur.**

The confidence which Henry's ministers expressed of finding *meet matter* to serve their master's turn, as well as More's last-mentioned prediction, proved but too correct. When the nun of Kent afforded not a substantial ground

* Roper.

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for his persecution, other subjects were not wanting which soon led to the tragedy of his cruel death.

In this year were passed,

I. The important law which regulated the succession to the crown;* by which the marriage of Henry with Catharine was declared void; the sentence annulling the marriage, which Cranmer, now primate, had passed, was ratified; and the king's marriage with Ann was confirmed. The crown was appointed to descend to the issue of this marriage, and failing such, to the king's heirs for ever. An oath was moreover required in favour of this succession, under penalty of imprisonment during the king's pleasure, and of forfeiture of goods and chattels.

II. The parliament conferred on Henry the title of the only supreme head on earth of the church of England.† By which, exclaimed the Romish party, the king and those he commissioned were made sole judges in matters of faith, and all ecclesiastical discipline was entrusted to them; the commission which our Saviour had granted his apostles and their successors was set aside by a human law, and the authority they derived from heaven transferred to the state; the care of souls was made to devolve on the civil power, and the being of christianity to depend on the will of the magistrate.

* 25 Hen. VIII. 22. † 26 Hen. VIII. c. 1.

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III. An act was passed,* by which it was made high treason for any person to maliciously wish, will, or desire, by words or writing, to deprive the king's most royal person, the queen, or their heirs apparent, or any of them, of the dignity, title or name of their royal estates.

Soon after the second of these acts, a Latin bible was published, and in his majesty's general preface he thus triumphed in his new title.

'Nos itaque considerantes id erga Deum officii nostri, quo suscepisse cognoscimur, ut in regno simus sicut anima in corpore et sol in mundo, utque loco Dei judicium exerceamus in regno nostro, et omnia in potestate habentes, quoad jurisdictionem, ipsam etiam ecclesiam vice Dei sedulo regamus ac tueamur, et disciplinæ ejus, sive augeatur aut solvatur, nos ei rationem reddituri simus qui nobis eam credidit, et in eo Dei vicem agentes Deique habentes imaginem; quid aliud vel cogitare vel in animam inducere potuimus, quam ut eodem confugeremus, ubi certo discendum esset, ne quid aliud vel ipsi faceremus, vel faciendum aliis præscriberemus, quam quod ab hac ipsa Dei lege ne vel transversum quidem digitum aberrare convinci queat.'

We have also another instance of Henry's triumph, in what Mr. Evelyn justly calls his *remarkable medalion;* the legend of which, in Latin, Hebrew, and Greek, provoked the remark, that Henry crucified the church as Pilate had

* Ibid. c. 13.

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done her Saviour, with the solemnity of three inscriptions. A representation of this medal may be seen in Mr. Evelyn's Numismata.

The Romish party in those days it seems understood by head of the church, chief spiritual shepherd, as if the king had power to administer sacraments, ordain priests, &c.; for all which they considered a layman as unqualified. But their adversaries contended that the term was only intended to declare the prince superior to the prelates who exempted themselves from his authority by their immunities, as well as superior to the laity; and that he was not subject to the pope, who claimed jurisdiction over all princes and countries. The king, said the latter, did not by this title challenge power to debate, or determine any point of faith or matter of religion, much less to be supreme judge or governor of all doctrine and discipline. But would the subject in his realm have the assistance of the magistrate, to establish truth and prohibit error, and by wholesome punishments to prevent disorder, that authority laid neither in prelate nor in pope, but in the prince; and in his dominions neither doctrine nor discipline could be established by public law, but by his consent.

The oath of succession was generally taken, and bishop Fisher and More were the only persons of note who entertained scruples as to its legality. More's high reputation for virtue and integrity made it supposed that his authority would influence others, and great pains were taken to con-

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vince him on this point. But the knight was immoveable, probably because the preamble of the oath implied, that the marriage with Catharine was unlawful; and whatever we think of his persuasion on this head, the integrity of his conscience we must admire.

Mr. Roper relates that the duke of Norfolk said one day to More,—'by the mass Mr. More, it is perilous striving with princes; therefore I would wish you somewhat to incline to the king's pleasure, for, by God's body! Mr. More, *indignatio principis mors est.*'——'Is that all my lord?' replied More; 'then in good faith the difference between your grace and me is but this; that I shall die to-day and you to-morrow.'

About a month after the law for the oath was passed, certain clergy of London and Westminster, and More, were cited to appear at Lambeth before Cranmer, Audley, and Cromwell, who were appointed to tender the oath unto them. More, as was his custom on important occasions, went to mass that morning; *and whereas,* continues Mr. Roper, *he evermore used before, at his departure from his wife and children, whom he tenderly loved, to have them bring him to his boat and there to kiss them and bid them all farewell, then would he suffer none of them forth the gate to follow him, but pulled the wicket after him and shut them all from him.* His countenance, adds Mr. Roper, who accompanied him in the boat to Lambeth, bespoke a heavy heart;

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and *sitting still sadly awhile*, at last he suddenly whispered to him, *son Roper, I thank our Lord! the field is won.*

As his mind appears to have predicted, More was not permitted to return home from this summons; and he wrote his favourite daughter an account of the proceedings at Lambeth, which here followeth.

Sir Thomas More to Mrs. Margaret Roper.

'When I was before the Lords at Lambeth, I was the first who was called in; albeit that Mr. Dr. the vicar of Croydon was come before me, and divers others. After the cause of my sending-for declared unto me, whereof I somewhat marvelled in my mind, considering that they sent for no more temporal men but me, I desired the sight of the oath; which they shewed me under the great seal. Then desired I the sight of the act of the succession; which was delivered me in a printed roll.

'After which read secretly by myself, and the oath considered with the act, I shewed unto them, that my purpose was not to put any fault either in the act or any man who made it, or in the oath or any man who sware it, nor to condemn the conscience of any other man; but as for *myself*, in good faith my conscience so moved me in the matter, that though I would not deny to swear to the succession, yet unto that oath which there was offered me I could not swear, without the jeoparding of my soul to perpetual

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damnation. And that if they doubted, whether I did refuse the oath only for the grudge of my conscience, or for any other fantasy, I was ready therein to satisfy them by mine oath: Which if they trusted not, what should they be the better to give me any oath? And if they trusted that I would therein swear true, then trusted I, that of their goodness they would not move me to swear the oath which they offered me, perceiving that for to swear it was against my conscience.

'Unto this my lord chancellor said, that they all were very sorry to hear me say thus, and see me thus refuse the oath. And they said all, that on their faith I was the very first who ever refused it; which would cause the king's highness to conceive great suspicion of me, and great indignation toward me. And therewith they shewed me the roll, and let me see the names of the lords and the commons, who had sworn and subscribed their names already. Which, notwithstanding, when they saw that I refused to swear the same myself, not blaming any other man who had sworn, I was in conclusion commanded to go down into the garden.

'And thereupon I tarried in the old burned chamber which looketh into the garden, and would not go down because of the heat. In that time saw I Mr. Dr. Latimer come into the garden, and there walked he with divers other doctors and chaplains of my lord of Canterbury. And very merry I saw him; for he laughed, and took one

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or twain about the neck so handsomely, that if they had been women I would have weened he had been waxen wanton. After that came Mr. Dr. Wilson forth from the lords, and was with two gentlemen brought by me, and gentlemanly sent straight unto the Tower. What time my lord of Rochester was called-in before them, that can I not tell. But at night I heard that he had been before them; but where he remained that night, and so forth till he was sent hither, I never heard. I heard also that Mr. vicar of Croydon, and all the remnant of the priests of London who were sent for, were sworn. And that they had such favour at the council's hand, that they were not lingered, nor made to dance any long attendance to their travail and cost, as suitors are sometimes wont to be, but were sped apace to their great comfort. So far forth, that Mr. vicar of Croydon, either for gladness or for dryness, or else that it might be seen *quod ille notus erat pontifici*, went to my lord's buttery-bar and called for drink, and drank *valde familiariter*.

'When they had played their pageant and were gone out of the place, then was I called-in again. And then was it declared unto me, what a number had sworn even since I went aside, gladly, without any sticking. Wherein I laid no blame in no man; but for mine own self, answered as before.

'Now as well before as then, they somewhat laid unto me for obstinacy; that whereas before, since I refused to

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swear, I would not declare any special part of that oath which grudged my conscience, and open the cause *wherefore*. For thereunto I had said unto them, that I feared lest the king's highness would, as they said, take displeasure enough toward me for the only refusal of the oath. And that if I should open and disclose the causes *why*, I should therewith but farther exasperate his highness. Which I would in nowise do; but rather would I abide all the danger and harm which might come toward me, than give his highness any occasion of farther displeasure, than the offering of the oath unto me, of pure necessity constrained me. Howbeit when they divers times imputed this to me for stubbornness and obstinacy, that I would neither swear the oath nor yet declare the causes *why*, I declined thus far toward them, that rather than I would be accounted for obstinate, I would upon the king's gracious licence, or rather his such commandment had, as might be my sufficient warrant that my declaration should not offend his highness nor put me in the danger of any of his statutes, I would be content to declare the causes in writing. And over that, to give an oath in the beginning, that if I might find those causes by any man in suchwise answered, as I might think mine own conscience satisfied, I would after that, with all mine heart, swear the principal oath too.

'To this I was answered, that though the king would give me licence under his letters patent, yet would it not serve against the statute. Whereto I said, that yet if I had them, I would stand unto the trust of his honour, at my peril for

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the remnant. But yet thinketh me lo! that if I may not declare the causes without peril, then to leave them undeclared is no *obstinacy*.

'My lord of Canterbury, taking hold upon that that I said, *that I condemned not the consciences of them who swear*, said unto me, that it appeared well that I did not take it for a very sure thing and a certain, that I might *not* lawfully swear it; but rather as a thing uncertain and doubtful. *But then*,' said my lord, '*you know for a certainty, and a thing without doubt, that you be bounden to obey your sovereign lord your king. And therefore are you bounden to leave-off the doubt of your unsure conscience in refusing the oath, and take the sure way in obeying of your prince, and swear it.*

'Now all was it so that in mine own mind methought myself not concluded, yet this argument seemed me suddenly so subtle, and namely, with such authority coming out of so noble a prelate's mouth, that I could again answer nothing thereto, but only that I thought myself I might not well do so; because that in my conscience this was one of the cases, in which I was bounden that I should not obey my prince. Since that whatsoever other folk thought in the matter, whose conscience or learning I would not condemn nor take upon me to judge, yet in my conscience the truth seemed on the other side. Wherein I had not informed my conscience neither suddenly nor slightly, but by long leisure and diligent search for the matter.

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And of truth if *that* reason may conclude, then have we a ready way to avoid all perplexities. For in whatsoever matter the doctors stand in great doubt, the king's commandment, given upon whether side he list, solveth all the doubts.

'Then said my lord of Westminster to me, that howsoever the matter seemed unto mine own mind, I had cause to fear that mine own mind was erroneous, when I see the great council of the realm determine of my mind the contrary; and that therefore I ought to change my conscience. To that I answered, that if there were no more but myself upon my side, and the whole parliament upon the other, I would be sore afraid to lean to mine own mind only, against so many. But on the other side, if it so be that in some things for which I refuse the oath, I have, as I think I have, upon my part as great a council and a greater too, I am not then bounden to change my conscience, and conform it to the council of one realm against the general council of christendom.

'Upon this Mr. Secretary, as he who tenderly favoureth me, said and swear a great oath, that he had leaver that his own only son (who is of truth a goodly young gentleman, and shall, I trust, come to much worship) had lost his head, than that I should thus have refused the oath. For surely the king's highness would now conceive a great suspicion against me, and think that the matter of the nun of Canterbury was all contrived by my drift. To which I said,

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that the contrary was true and well known; and whatsoever should mishap me, it lay not in my power to help it, without the peril of my soul.

'Then did my lord chancellor repeat before me my refusal unto Mr. Secretary, as to him who was going unto the king's grace. And in the rehearsing, his lordship repeated again, that I denied not, but was content to swear unto, the succession. Whereunto I said, that as for that point, *I would* be content, so that I might see my oath in that point so framed, in such a manner as might stand with my conscience. Then said my lord, *mary Mr. Secretary mark that too, that he will not swear that neither but under some certain manner. Verily no my lord,* quoth I; *but that I will see it made in suchwise first, as I shall myself see that I shall neither be forsworne, nor swear against my conscience.*

'Surely as to swear to the succession, I see no peril. But I thought, and think it reason, that to mine own oath I look well myself and be of counsel also in the fashion; and never intended to swear for a piece, and set my hand to the whole oath. Howbeit, as help me God! as touching the whole oath, I never withdrew any man from it; nor never advised any to refuse it; nor never put, nor will put, any scruple in any man's head; but leave every man to his own conscience. And methinketh in good faith, that so were it good reason, that every man should leave me to mine.'*

* English works.

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We scarcely know whether to be most surprised, that such an argument of mere sound as we have heard should have proceeded from Cranmer, should for a moment have influenced More, or should have had any weight with Burnet. *Every man*, saith S^t^. Paul, *should be fully persuaded in his own mind,—and though nothing be unclean of itself, yet to him who esteemeth anything unclean, to him it is unclean; and he who doubteth is damned if he eat.* Thus, though obedience to the king and the laws was a thing right in itself, and the duty of every subject; yet if it appeared to More that the oath was contrary to the law of God (to which another law had restrained the power of the legislature), he was so far from being obliged in conscience to take this oath, that he would have violated his conscience and been self-condemned had he taken it. Others who saw nothing in the oath which they thought contrary to the law of God, were not blamed by More, it is true, for taking it, for they had only done their duty; but Cranmer's conclusion, that More was only *doubtful* in this matter, by no means followed. He was, on the contrary, *well persuaded*, that it would be sinful in him to take the oath, who thought it contrary to the law of God.*

On the abbot of Westminster's reasoning, there needeth no other reflection than Burnet hath made,—it was very fit for so rich an abbot, and discovered the temper of his own conscience.

* See Warner.

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For four days, More was committed to the custody of this abbot; during which time, saith Mr. Roper, the king consulted with his council *what order were meet to be taken with him*. Cranmer, foreseeing the ill effect of contending with persons so highly esteemed over the world as More and Fisher, and who were of such a temper that severity would have no influence with them, wrote a curious letter to Cromwell on the occasion, which is preserved in the Cotton library, and places More's estimation in too strong a light, not to demand a place in the present work.

Archbishop Cranmer to Secretary Cromwell.

Right Worshipful Mr. Cromwell,

After most hearty commendations, &c.; I doubt not but you do right well remember, that my lord of Rochester and Mr. More were contented to be sworn to the act of the king's succession, but not to the preamble of the same. What was the cause of their refusal thereof I am uncertain, and they would by no means express the same. Nevertheless it must needs be, either the diminution of the authority of the bishop of Rome, or else the reprobation of the king's first pretenced matrimony.

But if they do obstinately persist in their opinions of the preamble, yet meseemeth it should not be refused, if they will be sworn to the very act of succession, so that they will be sworn to maintain the same against all powers

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and potentates. For hereby shall be a great occasion to satisfy the princess dowager, and the lady Mary, who do think that they should damn their souls if they should abandon and relinquish their estates. And not only it should stop the mouths of them, but also of the emperor, and other their friends, if they give as much credence to my lord of Rochester and Mr. More speaking or doing against them, as they hitherto have done and thought that all others should have done when they spake and did with them. And peradventure it should be a good quietation to many others within this realm, if such men should say, that the succession comprised within the said act is good and according to God's laws. For then I think there is not one within this realm who would once reclaim against it.

And whereas divers persons, either of a wilfulness will not, or of an indurate and invertible conscience cannot, alter from their opinions of the king's first pretenced marriage (wherein they have once said their minds, and percase have a persuasion in their heads, that if they should now vary therefrom, their fame and estimation were distained for ever), or else of the authority of the bishop of Rome; yet if all the realm with one accord would apprehend the said succession, in my judgment it is a thing to be amplected and embraced. Which thing, although I trust surely in God that it shall be brought to pass, yet hereunto might not a little avail the consent and oaths of these two persons, the bishop of Rochester and Mr. More,

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with their adherents or rather confederates. And if the king's pleasure so were, their said oaths might be suppressed, but when and where his highness might take some commodity by the publishing of the same. Thus our Lord have you ever in his conservation. From my manor at Croydon, the 17th day of April,

Your own assured ever,

THOMAS CANTUAR.

But this wise advice was not taken. The king (exasperated by queen Ann, if we may credit Mr. Roper), was much irritated against them, and resolved to proceed with them according to law. They were both indicted on the statute and committed prisoners to the Tower. It being apprehended that if they were allowed the use of pen and paper they would write against the marriage or supremacy, these were after a certain time denied them. When the king sent a general pardon, More and Fisher were not only excluded by general clauses, but by two particular acts they were attainted of misprision of treason. More in particular, was, by an invidious preamble, charged with ingratitude, for the great favours he had received from the king, and for studying to sow sedition among the king's subjects, and refusing to take the oath of succession; the king's grants to him were therefore declared void, and he was attainted as already related.*

* Roper and Burnet.

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Severe and revengeful as was this treatment, some thought it necessary in so important a crisis; lest indulgence to him who had enjoyed so great authority, might encourage others to revolt and be corrupted in their affection to the king. More was certainly not wanting in loyalty, and was willing to take the oath of succession however he disapproved the second marriage. His treason consisted in a point of conscience, and if the severity shewn him was not unjust, it was probably impolitic. If his reputation was high before, his present persecution for a mere opinion, and an opinion which the king and his subjects had so lately favoured, was likely only to raise it higher.

We have in his English works another letter from More to Cromwell, written probably while he was in the custody of the abbot of Westminster, from which we will extract what he writes concerning the king's marriage and the pope's primacy, and therewith conclude the present chapter.

'Upon a time at my coming from beyond the sea, where I had been on the king's business, I repaired, as my duty was, unto the king's grace, being at that time at Hampton-court. At which time, suddenly his highness, walking in the gallery, brake with me of his great matter; and shewed me, that it was now perceived, that his marriage was not only against the positive laws of the church and the written law of God, but also, in suchwise against the law of nature, that it could in nowise by the church be dispens-

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able. Now so was it, before my going over the sea I had heard certain things moved against the bull of the dispensation, concerning the words in the law Levitical and the law Deutronomical, to prove the prohibition to be *de jure divino*. But yet perceived I not at that time, but that the greater hope of the matter stood, in certain faults which were found in the bull; whereby the bull should by the law not be sufficient. And such comfort was there in that point (as far as I perceived), a good season, that the counsel on the other part were fain to bring-forth a brief, by which they pretended those defaults to be supplied. The truth of which brief was by the king's counsel suspected, and much diligence was thereafter done for the trial of that point. Wherein what was finally found, either I never knew, or else I not remember.

'But I rehearse you this to the intent you shall know, that the first time that ever I heard that point moved, that it should be in such high degree against the law of nature, was the time in which, as I began tell you, the king's grace shewed it me himself, and laid the Bible open before me; and there read me the words which moved his highness and divers other erudite persons so to think, and asked me farther what myself thought thereon. At which time, not presuming to look that his highness should any thing take that point for the more proved or improved for my poor mind in so great a matter, I shewed nevertheless, as my duty was at his commandment, what thing I thought upon the words which I there read. Whereupon his highness, ac-

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cepting benignly my sudden unadvised answer, commanded me to commune farther with Mr. Fox, now his grace's almoner, and to read with him a book which then was in making for that matter.

'After which book read, and my poor opinion eftsoons declared unto his highness thereupon, his highness, like a prudent and a virtuous prince, assembled at another time at Hampton-court a good number of very well-learned men. At which time, as far as ever I heard, there were, as was in so great a matter most likely to be, divers opinions among them. Howbeit, I never heard but that they agreed at that time upon a certain form, in which the book should be made; which was afterward, at York-place in my lord cardinal's chamber read, in the presence of divers bishops and many learned men. And they all thought, that there appeared in the book good and reasonable causes, which might well move the king's highness, being so virtuous a prince, to conceive in his mind a scruple against his marriage. Which, while he could not otherwise avoid, he did well and virtuously, for the acquieting of his conscience, to sue; and procure to have his doubt decided by judgment of the church.

'After this the suit began, and the legates sat upon the matter. During all which time, I never meddled there, nor was a man meet to do; for the matter was in hand by an ordinary process of the spiritual law, whereof I could little skill. And, yet while the legates were sitting upon the

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matter, it pleased the king's highness, to send me, in the company of my lord of London, now of Durham, in embassy, about the peace which, at our being there, was concluded at Cambray, between his highness and the emperor and the French king. And after my coming home, his highness, of his only goodness, as far unworthy as I was thereto, made me, as you well know, his chancellor of this realm. Soon after which time, his grace moved me again, yet eftsoons to look and consider his great matter; and well and indifferently to ponder such things as I should find therein. And if it so were, that thereupon it should hap me, to see such things as should persuade me to that part, he would gladly use me among other of his counsellors in the matter. And nevertheless he graciously declared unto me, that he would in nowise that I should other thing do or say therein, than upon *that* that I should perceive mine own conscience should serve me; and that I should first look unto God, and after God unto him; which most gracious words, was the first lesson also that ever his grace gave me, at my first coming into his noble service.

'This motion was to me very comfortable; and much I longed, beside anything that myself either had seen, or by farther search should hap to find for the one part or the other, yet specially to have some conference in the matter with some such of his grace's learned council, as most for his part had laboured and most had found in the matter. Whereupon his highness assigned unto me the now most reverend fathers, archbishops of Canterbury and York, with

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Mr. Dr. Fox now his grace's almoner, and Mr. Dr. Nicholas the Italian friar. Whereupon I not only sought and read, and, as far forth as my poor wit and learning served me, well weighed and considered, every such thing as I could find myself, or read in any other man's labour which I could get who anything had written thereon, but had also diligent conference with his grace's counsellors aforesaid. Whose honours and worships I nothing mistrust in this point, but that they both have and will report unto his highness, that they never found obstinate manner or fashion in me; but a mind as toward and as conformable, as reason could in a matter disputable require.

'Whereupon, the king's highness being farther advertised, both by them and by myself, of my poor opinion in the matter,—wherein, to have been able or meet to do him service, I would, as I then shewed his highness, have been more glad than of all such worldly commodities as I either then had or ever should come to —— his highness, graciously taking agreeably my good mind in that behalf, used, of his blessed disposition, in the prosecuting of his great matter, only those (of whom his grace had good number), whose conscience his grace perceived well and fully persuaded upon that part. And as well me, as any other to whom his highness thought the thing to seem otherwise, he used in his other business. Abiding, of his abundant goodness, nevertheless gracious lord unto every man; nor never was willing to put any man in ruffle, or trouble of his conscience.

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'After this did I never nothing more therein. Nor never any word wrote I therein to the impairing of his grace's part, neither before nor after. But settling my mind in quiet to serve his grace in other things, I would not so much as look nor let lie by me any book of the other part, albeit that I gladly read afterward divers books which were made on his part. Nor never would I read the book which Mr. Abel made on the other side, nor other books which were as I heard say made in Latin beyond the sea, nor never gave ear to the pope's proceeding in the matter. Moreover, where I had found in my study a book which I had before borrowed of my lord of Bath (which book he had made of the matter, at such time as the legates sat here thereupon) which book had been by me negligently cast aside; and that I shewed him, I would send him home his book again; he told me, that in good faith he had long time before discharged his mind of that matter, and, having forgotten that copy to remain in my hand, had burned his own copy which he had thereof at home. And because he no more minded to meddle anything in the matter, he desired me to burn the same book too; and, upon my faith, so did I!

'Beside this, divers other ways have I so used myself, that if I rehearsed them all it should well appear, that I never have had against his grace's marriage any manner of demeanour, whereby his highness might have any manner of cause or occasion of displeasure toward me. For, likewise as I am not he who either can, or whom it could become to take upon me the determination or decision of

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such a weighty matter (whereof divers points a great way pass my learning); so am I he who, among other his grace's faithful subjects, his highness being in possession of his marriage, will most heartily pray for that prosperous estate of his grace long to continue, to the pleasure of God.

'As touching the THIRD point, the primacy of the pope, I nothing meddle in that matter. Truth it is, that, as I told you when you desired me to shew you what I thought therein, I was myself sometime not of the mind, that the primacy of that see should be begun by the institution of God; until that I read in that matter those things which the king's highness had written, in his most famous book against the heresies of Martin Luther.

'At the first reading whereof, I moved the king's highness, either to leave-out that point, or else to touch it more slenderly; for doubt of such things as after might hap to fall in question, between his highness and some pope, as between princes and popes divers times have done. Whereunto his highness answered me, *that he would in nowise anything minish of that matter;* of which thing, his highness shewed me a secret cause, whereof I never had anything heard before. But surely, after that I had read his grace's book thereon, and so many other things as I have seen on that point by this continuance of these seven years since and more, I have found in effect, the substance of all the holy doctors, from S^t^. Ignatius, disciple of S^t^. John the Evangelist, unto our own days, both Latins and Greeks,

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so consonant and agreeing in that point, and the thing by such general councils so confirmed also, that in good faith I never neither read nor heard anything of such effect on the other side, which ever could lead me to think that my conscience were well discharged, but rather *in right great peril*, if I should follow the other side and deny the primacy to be provided by God.

'Which if we did, yet can I nothing, as I shewed you, perceive any commodity which ever could come by that denial; for that the primacy is at the leastwise instituted by the corps of christendom, and for a great, urgent cause, in avoiding of schisms; and corroborated by continual succession, more than the space of a thousand years at the least; for there are passed almost a thousand years since the time of holy S^{t}. Gregory. And therefore, since all christendom is one corps, I cannot perceive how any member thereof may, without the common assent of the body, depart from the common head. And then, if we may not lawfully leave it by ourselves, I cannot perceive but, if the thing were a treating in a general council, what the question could avail, whether the primacy were instituted immediately by God or ordained by the church.

'As for the general councils assembled lawfully, I never could perceive but that, in the declaration of the truth, it is to be believed and to be standen-to. The authority whereof ought to be taken for undoubtable. Or else, were there in nothing no certainty but, through christendom, up-

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on every man's affectionate reason, all things might be brought from day to day into continual ruffle and confusion. From which, by the general councils, the spirit of God, assisting every such council well assembled, keepeth, and ever shall keep, the corps of his catholic church. And verily, since the king's highness hath, as by the book of his honourable council appeareth, appealed to the general council from the pope (in which council I beseech our Lord send his grace comfortable speed!), methinketh in my poor mind, it could be no fartherance there unto his grace's cause, if his highness should in his own realm before, either by laws making or books putting-forth, seem to derogate and deny not only the primacy of the see apostolic, but also the authority of the general councils too. Which I verily trust his highness intendeth not; for, in the next general council, it may well happen, that this pope may be deposed, and another substituted in his room, with whom the king's highness may be very well content.

'For, albeit that I have for mine own part such opinion of the pope's primacy as I have shewed you, yet never thought I the pope above the general council; nor never have, in any book of mine, put-forth among the king's subjects in our vulgar tongue, advanced greatly the pope's authority. For, albeit that a man may peradventure find therein, that, after the common manner of all christian realms, I speak of him as primate; yet never do I stick thereon, with reasoning and proving of that point. And in my book against the Masker, I wrote not I wot-well five

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times, and yet of no more but only S^t^. Peter himself; from whose person many take not the primacy, even of those who grant it none of his successors. And yet was that book made, printed, and put-forth of very truth, before that any of the books of the council were either printed or spoken-of. But, whereas I had written thereof at length in my Confutation before, and for the proof thereof had compiled together all that I could find therefore, at such time as I little looked that there should fall between the king's highness and the pope such a breach as is fallen since; when I after that saw the thing likely to draw toward such displeasure between them, I suppressed it utterly, and never put word thereof into my book, but put-out the remnant without it. Which thing well declareth, that I never intended anything to meddle in that matter against the king's gracious pleasure, whatsoever mine own opinion were therein.

'And thus have I, good Mr. Cromwell, long troubled your mistership with a long process of these matters; with which I neither durst, nor it could become me, to encumber the king's noble grace. But I beseech you, for our Lord's love, that you be not so weary of my most cumbrous suit, but that it may like you, at such opportune time or times as your wisdom may find, to help that his highness may, by your goodness, be fully informed of my true, faithful mind. That he may the rather, by the means of your wisdom and dexterity, consider, that in the matter of the nun, there was never on my part any other mind than

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good. Nor yet in any other thing else, never was there nor never shall there be, any farther fault found in me, than that I cannot in every thing think the same way that some other men, of more wisdom and deeper learning, do; nor can find in mine heart otherwise to say, than as mine own conscience giveth me. Which condition hath never grown, in any thing which ever might touch his gracious pleasure, of any obstinate mind or mis-affectionate appetite, but of a timorous conscience; rising haply for lack of better perceiving, and yet not without tender respect unto my most bounden duty toward his noble grace. Whose only favour I so much esteem, that I nothing have of mine own in all this world, *except only my soul*, but that I will with better will forego it, than abide of his highness one heavy, displeasant look.'

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CHAP. V.

Henry VIII and Constantius.... More's firmness.... Anecdotes.... Mrs. Roper visiteth him.... His pains to meet his fate in a becoming manner.... His reflection on the execution of Reynolds, &c.... His verses on Cromwell's promise.... Lady More visiteth him, and some of the privy-council.... His two letters to his daughter.... His books taken from him.... Rich's conversation with More.... More arraigned.... The commissioners and jury.... More's answer to the indictment.... His answer to Rich.... The jury find him guilty.... His arguments as to the insufficiency of the indictment.... The chancellor's answer, and More's reply.... Sentence passed upon him.... Farther proceedings.... More's courage and constancy.... His meeting with his children.... Anecdote.... His last letter to his daughter.... Sir Thomas Pope sent to him.... More's preparation for death.... His last jokes, and execution.... His burial.

THE later times of Henry VIII have been well enough compared to those of Constantius. Of this emperor Ammianus Marcellinus observes, he was cruel toward all who truly or falsely were charged with treason. Any accusation, how slight soever, served to ruin a man; and his subjects were so far from daring to tell their dreams, lest they

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should have a treasonable interpretation put upon them, that *they dared not to own they ever slept.* If we except the history of Henry's own family, perhaps no stronger instance occurs in his reign of the justice of the comparison, than his sacrifice of Sir Thomas More.

Neither irritated by persecution, nor dismayed in the least degree by kingly power, in a mild though firm manner, the knight maintained his resolution; and the accustomed facetiousness of his disposition forsook him not even in his way to prison.

It was More's custom to wear a golden chain around his neck, and he now had it on as usual. His conductor to the Tower advised him to send this ornament home to his wife, or to some of his children. *Nay sir*, replied More, *that will I not; for if I were taken in the field by my enemies, I would they should somewhat fare the better for me.*

At the Tower-gate, the porter demanded of More his upper garment. The knight presented him his cap, and was very sorry it was no better. Wit was, however, not current with Cerberus, who soon disrobed the knight of his gown.

When More was conducted to his appartment by the lieutenant of the Tower, he called his servant John Wood, who was appointed to attend him, and who could neither read nor write, and brought him to his oath before the

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lieutenant, that if he should witness that the knight spoke or wrote against the king, the council or the state, he should immediately declare it to the lieutenant, that it might be communicated without delay to the council.

The lieutenant, adds Mr. Roper, soon afterward acknowledged his former obligations to More, and his wish now to afford him *good cheer;* but since by so doing he should hazard the king's displeasure, he trusted More would accept his good will and such poor cheer as he dared to afford him. 'Mr. Lieutenant,' replied More, 'I verily believe, as you may, so are you my good friend indeed, and would, as you say, with your best cheer entertain me; for the which I most heartily thank you: And assure yourself Mr. Lieutenant, I do not mislike my cheer; but whensoever I so do, then *thrust me out of your doors.*'

Such indeed was More's mind, that his punishments, as they were called, only afforded him opportunities for the display of that superior patience and constancy, which the ordinary occurrences of life were hardly sufficient to appreciate.

When he had been in the Tower about a month, Mrs. Roper by earnest entreaty at length obtained permission to visit her father. After some time spent with her in prayer, according to his usual custom, 'I believe Meg (said More, among other things), that they who have put me here ween they have done me a high displeasure. But I assure thee

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on my faith mine own good daughter, if it had not been for my wife and ye who be my children, I would not have failed long ere this, to have closed myself in as straight a room and straighter too. But, since I am come hither without mine own desert, I trust that God of his goodness will discharge me of my care, and with his gracious help supply my lack among ye. I find no cause, I thank God! Meg, to reckon myself in worse case here than at home. For methinketh, God maketh me a wanton, and setteth me on his lap and dandleth me.' *

In the course of his imprisonment, More seems never for a moment to have lost sight of the end which it was probable he should come to. He owns that he was of an irritable habit by nature, and weak against bodily suffering. Yet the whole force of his mind appears to have been exerted at this time, in preparation to meet his fate with constancy and composure. He withdrew himself by degrees from every worldly interest, and dwelt with daily increasing delight on his hope of a better state. Though few men have ever had more substantial ground for confidence in their own merits, he looked forward to the great judgment with trembling, but with every hope from his Maker's mercy and the merits of Christ. We shall find that the effects of his endeavours, even to human eyes, were wonderful; that no man ever overcame worldly suffering in the end more completely, or met so severe a fate with less dread of the stroke.

* Roper.

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Looking out of his window in the Tower one day when Reynolds, a father of Sion, and three monks, were leading to execution, on the affair of the king's marriage and supremacy, 'Lo dost thou not see Meg,' he exclaimed to his daughter, 'that these blessed fathers be now as cheerfully going to their deaths as bridegrooms to their marriage. Wherefore thereby mayst thou see, mine own good daughter, what a great difference there is between such as have in effect spent all their days in a straight, and penitential, and painful life religiously, and such as have in the world, like worldly wretches, as thy poor father hath done, consumed all their time in pleasure and ease licentiously. For God, considering their long-continued life in most sore and grievous pennance, will no longer suffer them to remain here in this vale of misery, but speedily hence taketh them to the fruition of his everlasting deity. Whereas thy silly father, Meg, who like a wicked caitiff hath passed forth the whole course of his miserable life most sinfully, God, thinking him not worthy so soon to come to that eternal felicity, leaveth him here yet still in this world, farther to be plagued and turmoiled with misery.' *

Secretary Cromwell came to More one day in the Tower from the king, as Mr. Roper informs us, and pretending great friendship for the knight, told him that his majesty would be good and gracious to him, and not trouble his conscience in future with any matter wherein he should have cause for scruple. But More understood Henry and

* Roper.

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his court too well, to fix the smallest reliance on such a promise; and to prove what little credit he attached to it, he wrote these verses so soon as Cromwell was gone, which are preserved in his English works.

Ey flattering Fortune, look thou ne'er so fair
Or ne'er so pleasantly begin to smile,
As though thou wouldst my ruin all repair;
During my life thou shalt me not beguile.
Trust shall I God, to enter in a while
His haven of heaven sure and uniform.
Ever, after thy calm, look I for a storm.

Lady More at length procured permission to visit her husband, and soon exclaimed in her usual worldly manner. 'I marvel that you, who hitherto have been taken for a wise man, will now so play the fool to lie here in this close filthy prison, and be content thus to be shut-up among mice and rats; when you might be abroad at your liberty, and with the favour and good-will both of the king and his council, if you would but do as all the bishops and best-learned of this realm have done. And seeing you have at Chelsea a right fair house, your library, your gallery, garden, orchard, and all other necessaries so handsome about you, where you might in the company of me your wife, your children and household be merry, I muse what a God's name you mean here still thus fondly to tarry.' More asked her if his present habitation was not as near heaven as his own house? And since, if he were buried seven years, and then rose and came to his own house, he should not fail

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to find some therein who would bid him get out of doors and tell him *it was none of his*, why he should love a house which would so soon forget its master? *How long*, he added, *do you think we may live to enjoy it? Some twenty years*, she replied. *If you had said some thousand*, answered More, *it had been somewhat; and yet he were a very bad merchant who would put himself in danger to lose eternity for a thousand years. How much the rather, if we be not sure to enjoy it one day to an end!* *

It is possible that the good lady may have been an instrument employed by the court, to endeavour at prevailing on her husband to meet the wishes of the king. At least, no attempt appears to have been spared, toward the completion of an object which was evidently deemed of no small importance. For, not long after the meeting already described, the chancellor, the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, Cromwell, and others of the privy council, came to More at two distinct times, *by all pollicies possible procuring him*, saith Mr. Roper, either precisely to confess the supremacy, or precisely to deny it. At either of these times, More wrote confidentially to his daughter Margaret, describing to her what had passed, and the letters are preserved in his English works. As these letters give us the best account we have of the proceedings, they are here presented to the reader.

* Roper and More.

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Our Lord bless you my dearly beloved daughter !

'I doubt not but, by the reason of the king's counsellors resorting hither in this time, in which (our Lord be their comfort!) these fathers of the Charterhouse and Mr. Reynolds of Sion be now judged to death for treason (whose matters and causes I know not), may hap to put you in trouble and fear of mind concerning me, being here prisoner; specially for that it is not unlikely that you have heard, that I was brought also before the council here myself. I have thought it necessary to advertise you of the very truth; to the end that, you should neither conceive more hope than the matter giveth, lest upon another turn it might agrieve your heaviness; nor more grief and fear than the matter giveth on the other side.

'Wherefore shortly you shall understand, that on Friday the last day of April in the afternoon, Mr. Lieutenant came in here unto me and shewed me, that Mr. Secretary would speak with me. Whereupon I shifted my gown, and went out with Mr. Lieutenant into the gallery to him; where I met many, some known and some unknown, in the way. And in conclusion, coming into the chamber where his mistership sat with Mr. Attorney, Mr. Solicitor, Mr. Bedyll, and Mr. Dr. Tregonwell, I was offered to sit-down with them; which in nowise I would.

'Whereupon Mr. Secretary shewed unto me, that he

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doubted not but that I had, by such friends as hither had resorted to me, seen the new statutes made at the last sitting of the parliament. Whereunto I answered *yea verily;* howbeit forasmuchas, being here, I have no conversation with any people, I thought it little need for me to bestow much time upon them; and therefore I re-delivered the book shortly, and the effect of the statutes I never marked, nor studied to put in remembrance. Then he asked me, whether I had not read the first statute of them, of the king being head of the church? whereunto I answered *yes.* Then his mistership declared unto me, that since it was now by act of parliament ordained, that his highness and his heirs be, and ever of right have been and perpetually should be, supreme head on earth of the church of England under Christ, the king's pleasure was, that those of his council there assembled, should demand mine opinion, and what my mind was therein.

'Whereunto I answered, that in good faith I had well trusted, that the king's highness would never have commanded any such question to be demanded of me, considering that I ever from the beginning well and truly, from time to time, declared my mind unto his highness; *and since that time,* I said, *unto your mistership, Mr. Secretary, also, both by mouth and by writing. And now I have in good faith discharged my mind of all such matters, and neither will dispute kings' titles nor popes'. But the king's true, faithful subject I am, and will be; and daily I pray for him and all his, and for you all who are of his honourable council,*

and for all the realm. And otherwise than this I never intend to meddle.

'Whereunto Mr. Secretary answered, that he thought this manner of answer should not satisfy nor content the king's highness; but that his grace would exact a more full answer. And his mistership added thereunto, that the king's highness was a prince, not of rigour, but of mercy and pity. And though that he had found obstinacy at some time in any of his subjects, yet when he should find them at another time conformable and submit themselves, his grace would shew mercy. And that, concerning myself, his highness would be glad to see me take such conformable ways, as I might be abroad in the world again among other men, as I have been before.

'Whereunto I shortly, after the inward affection of my mind, answered, for a very truth, *that I would never meddle in the world again to have the world given me.* And to the remnant of the matter I answered in effect as before; shewing that I had fully determined with myself, neither to study nor meddle with any matter of this world; but that my whole study should be, upon the passion of Christ and mine own passage out of this world.

'Upon this I was commanded to go forth for a while, and afterward called-in again. At which time Mr. Secretary said unto me, that though I were a prisoner condemned to perpetual prison, yet I was not thereby discharged

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of mine obedience and allegiance unto the king's highness. And thereupon demanded me, whether that I thought, that the king's grace might not exact of me such things as are contained in the statutes, and upon like pains as he might upon other men? Whereto I answered, that I would not say the contrary. Whereunto he said, that likewise as the king's highness would be gracious to them whom he found conformable, so his grace would follow the course of his laws toward such as he shall find obstinate. And his mistership said farther, that my demeanour in that matter, was a thing which of likelihood made others so stiff therein as they be.

'Whereto I answered, that I gave no man occasion to hold any point, one or other; nor never gave any man advice or counsel therein, one way or other. And for conclusion, I could no farther go, whatsoever pain should come thereof. *I am*, quoth I, *the king's true faithful subject and daily bedesman; and pray for his highness and all his, and all the realm. I do nobody harm, I say none harm, I think none harm, but wish everybody good. And if this be not enough to keep a man alive, in good faith I long not to live. And I am dying already, and have, since I came here, been divers times in the case, that I thought to die within one hour. And, I thank our Lord! I was never sorry for it; but rather sorry when I saw the pang past. And therefore, my poor body is at the king's pleasure; would God my death might do him good!*

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'After this Mr. Secretary said, *well, you find no fault in that statute, find you any in any of the other statutes after?* Whereto I answered, *sir, whatsoever thing should seem to me other than good in any of the other statutes, or in that statute either, I would not declare what fault I found, nor speak thereof.* Whereunto finally his mistership said full gently, that of anything which I had spoken there should none advantage be taken. And whether he said farther that there was none to be taken, I am not well remembered; but he said, that report should be made unto the king's highness, and his gracious pleasure known.

'Whereupon I was delivered again to Mr. Lieutenant, who was then called-in; and so was I, by Mr. Lieutenant, brought again into my chamber. And here am I yet, in such case as I was, neither better nor worse. That that shall follow, lieth in the hand of God. Whom I beseech, to put in the king's grace's mind that thing which may be to his high pleasure; and in mine, to mind only the weal of my soul, with little regard of my body; and you, with all yours and my wife and all my children, and all our other friends both bodily and ghostly, heartily well to fare. And I pray you and them all, pray for me, and take no thought whatsoever shall happen me. For I verily trust in the goodness of God, seem it never so evil to this world, it shall indeed in another world be for the best.

Your loving father,

THOMAS MORE, KN^T.

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'*Our Lord bless you and all yours!*

'Forasmuch, dearly beloved daughter, as it is likely, that you either have heard, or shortly shall hear, that the council were here this day and that I was before them, I have thought it necessary to send you word how the matter standeth. And verily, to be short, I perceive little difference between this time and the last. For, as far as I can see, the whole purpose is, either to drive me to say precisely the one way, or else precisely the other.

'Here sat my lord of Canterbury, my lord chancellor, my lord of Suffolk, my lord of Wiltshire, and Mr. Secretary. And after my coming, Mr. Secretary made rehearsal, in whatwise he had reported unto the king's highness what had been said by his grace's council to me, and what had been answered by me to them, at mine other being before them here last; which thing his mistership rehearsed, in good faith, very well, as I acknowledged, and confessed, and heartily thanked him therefore. Whereupon he added thereunto, that the king's highness was nothing content nor satisfied with mine answer; but thought, that by my demeanour I had been occasion of much grudge and harm in the realm, and that I had an obstinate mind and an evil toward him, and that my duty was, being his subject —— and so he had sent them now, in his name, upon mine allegiance, to command me —— to make a plain and a terminate answer, whether I thought the statute lawful or not;

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and that I should either acknowledge and confess it lawful that his highness should be supreme head of the church of England, or else utter plainly my malignity.

'Whereto I answered, that I had no malignity, and therefore I could none utter. And as to the matter, I could none other answer make than I had before made; which answer his mistership had there rehearsed. Very heavy I was, that the king's highness should have any such opinion of me. Howbeit if there were one who had informed his highness many evil things of me which were untrue,—to which his highness for the time gave credence,—I would be very sorry that he should have that opinion of me the space of one day; howbeit if I were sure, that other should come on the morrow by whom his grace should know the truth of mine innocency, I should in the meanwhile comfort myself with consideration of that. And in likewise now, though it be great heaviness to me that his highness hath such opinion of me for the while, yet have I no remedy to help it; but only to comfort myself with this consideration, that I know very well that the time shall come, when God shall declare my truth toward his grace before him and all the world. And whereas it might haply seem to be but small cause of comfort, because I might take harm here first in the meanwhile, I thanked God that my case was such here in this matter, through the clearness of mine own conscience, that though I might have pain, I could not have harm; for a man may in such a case lose his head, and have none harm. For I was very sure that I had no cor-

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rupt affection, but that I had alway from the beginning truly used myself, looking first upon God and next upon the king; according to the lesson which his highness taught me at my first coming to his noble service, the most virtuous lesson which ever prince taught his servant. Whose highness to have of me now such opinion, is my great heaviness; but I have no mean, as I said, to help it. But only comfort myself in the meantime with the hope of the joyful day, in which my truth toward him shall well be known. And in this matter farther I could not go, nor other answer thereto I could not make.

'To this it was said, by my lord chancellor and Mr. Secretary both, that the king might by his laws compel me to make a plain answer thereto, either the one way or the other. Whereto I answered, that I would not dispute the king's authority what his highness might do in such a case; but I said, that verily, under correction, it seemed to me somewhat hard. For if it so were that my conscience gave me against the statute (wherein how my conscience giveth me I make no declaration), then I nothing doing nor nothing saying against the statute, it were a very hard thing to compel me to say, either precisely with it against my conscience to the loss of my soul, or precisely against it to the destruction of my body.

'To this Mr. Secretary said, that I had ere this, when I was chancellor, examined heretics and thieves, and other malefactors; and gave me a great praise above my deserv-

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ing in that behalf. And he said that I then, as he thought, and at the leastwise bishops, did use to examine heretics whether they believed the pope to be head of the church, and used to compel them to make a precise answer thereto. And why should not then the king, since it is a law made here that his grace is head of the church here, compel men to answer precisely to the law here, as they did then concerning the pope?

'I answered, and said that I protested that I intended not to defend my part or stand in contention; but, I said there was a difference between those two cases. Because that at that time, as well here as elsewhere through the corps of christendom, the pope's power was recognised for an undoubted thing; which seemeth not like a thing agreed in this realm, and the contrary taken for truth in other realms.

'Whereto Mr. Secretary answered, that they were as well burned for the denying of that, as they be beheaded for the denying of this; and therefore as good reason to compel them to make precise answer to the one as to the other. Whereto I answered, that since in this case a man is not by a law of one realm so bound in his conscience, where there is a law of the whole corps of christendom to the contrary, in a matter touching belief, as he is by a law of the whole corps, though there hap to be made in some place a law *local* to the contrary,—the reasonableness or the unreasonableness in binding a man to precise answer,

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standeth not in the respect or difference between heading and burning; but, because of the difference in charge of conscience, the difference standeth between heading and hell.

'Much was there answered unto this, both by Mr. Secretary and my lord chancellor,—overlong to rehearse. And in conclusion, they offered me an oath, by which I should be sworn to make true answer to such things as should be asked me, on the king's behalf concerning the king's own person. Whereto I answered, that verily I never purposed to swear any book-oath more, while I lived. Then they said, that I was very obstinate if I would refuse that; for every man doth it in the star-chamber, and everywhere. I said, that was true. But I had not so little foresight, but that I might well conjecture what should be part of mine interrogatories; and as good it was to refuse them at the first, as afterward.

'Whereto my lord chancellor answered, that he thought I guessed truth,—for I should see them. And so they were shewn me; and they were but twain,—the first, whether I had seen the statute; the other, whether I believed that it were a lawful-made statute or not. Whereupon I refused the oath; and said farther by mouth, that the first I had before confessed, and to the second I would make none answer. Which was the end of our communication, and I was thereupon sent away.

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'In the communication before, it was said, that it was marvelled, that I stack so much in my conscience while at the uttermost I was not *sure* therein. Whereto I said, that I was very sure that mine own conscience, so informed as it is by such diligence as I have so long taken therein, may stand with mine own salvation. I meddle not with the conscience of them who think otherwise; every man *suo damno stat aut cadit*, I am no man's judge.

'It was also said unto me, that if I had as lief be out of the world as in it, as I had there said, why did I not then speak even plain out against the statute? It appeared well I was not content to die, though I said so. Whereto I answered, as the truth is, that I have not been a man of such holy living, as I might be bold to offer myself to death, lest God for my presumption might suffer me to fall; and therefore I put not myself forward, but draw back. Howbeit if God draw me to it himself, then trust I in his great mercy, that he shall not fail to give me grace and strength.

'In conclusion, Mr. Secretary said, that he liked me this day much worse than he did the last time. For then, he said, he pitied me much; and now, he thought, I meant not well. But God and I know both, that I mean well; and so I pray God do by me! I pray you, be you and mine other good friends of good cheer, whatsoever fall of me; and take no thought for me, but pray for me, as I do and shall for you and all them.

Your tender, loving father,

THOMAS MORE, KN^T.

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It was soon after this that Rich, then newly made the king's solicitor, Sir Richard Southwell, and one Palmer, servant to Cromwell, were sent to More to take his books from him.* The knight had sometime previously, saith his great-grandson, begun a *divine treatise* of the passion of Christ; but when he came to expound the words *they laid hands upon him and held him*, these gentlemen took from him all his books, ink, and paper. More hereupon devoted himself wholly to meditation, and closed his chamber windows. And when the lieutenant of the Tower inquired of him his reason for so doing, More answered, *when all the wares are gone the shop-windows may be shut*. He still, however, contrived to procure scraps of paper, on which he now wrote with a coal; and one of these scraps, *a precious jewel*, as he calls it, his great-grandson inherited.

It hath been supposed by some, that Rich was sent on this occasion with a view to entangle More if possible in a dispute; and if nothing could fairly be deduced from their conversation to the knight's prejudice, that the solicitor was at any rate to have accused More falsely. But a design of this kind, although it be by no means inconsistent with the character of Henry's court, must now rest upon our conjectures only, and cannot be expected at this distant day to admit of fresh proof.

Certain it is, that while Southwell and Palmer were packing the books, Rich, pretending familiar conversation with

* Roper.

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More, said to him, since he was learned in the law and otherwise, might he put the question to him, *if there was an act of parliament that the realm should take me for king, would not you take me for king?*

Yes sir, replied More, *that would I.*

I put the case farther, said Rich. *Were there an act of parliament that all the realm should take me for pope, would not you then take me for pope?*

More replied, the parliament might well meddle with the state of temporal princes, but to answer the other case, he would put this case. *Suppose the parliament would make a law that God should not be God, would you then Mr. Rich say that God were not God?*

No sir, replied Rich, *that would I not; since no parliament may make any such law.*

Here, according to Mr. Roper, the conversation ended. But Rich when called upon at More's trial falsely reported, that the knight rejoined to this answer, *no more could the parliament make the king supreme head of the church.*

When More was arraigned at the King's-bench bar, he had been for above a year in prison. His bodily strength had been materially impaired, having experienced returns of the complaint in his breast, and new attacks of the

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gravel and stone.* Weak and emaciated, he leaned on a crutch when he went to this trial, yet his countenance was firm and cheerful. He was tried, probably by special commission, before

Chancellor Audley,
Chief-justice Fitzjames,
Sir John Baldwin,
Sir Richard Leister,
Sir John Port,
Sir John Spilman,
Sir Walter Luke,
Sir Anthony Fitzherbert.

His jury, for their names too deserve to be recorded to their infamy, were

Sir Thomas Palmer,
Sir Thomas Peirt,
George Lovell, } Esqrs.
Thomas Burbage, }
Geoffrey Chamber, }
Edward Stockmore, }
William Browne, }
Jasper Leake, } Gentlemen;
Thomas Billington, }
John Parnel, }
Richard Bellame, }
George Stoakes.† }

The indictment was so long, that More declared he could

* Eng. works, p. 1434. † More.

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scarcely remember a third part of what was objected against him.* His chief crime was, his refusal of the oath as we have already seen; which was termed *malicious, traitorous, and diabolical.* His two examinations in the Tower, with the declarations he then made, were adduced in proof of the charge. And it was alleged, that he had written letters to bishop Fisher, to bias that prelate likewise; for his answers resembled those made by More. Upon the whole, it was concluded, that the knight was a traitor to his prince and to the realm, for denying the king's supreme jurisdiction in ecclesiastical government.

The reader who hath marked the character of Henry's reign, will already have anticipated the result of this trial. For he needeth not to be told, that this prince made his will a rule for judges and even juries; that he sported with law and common-sense on all occasions; that his parliaments followed his caprices with servility; and that they as well as himself were lost to all sense of shame. The fate of Sir Thomas More is a striking, among many other lamentable exemplifications of these horrid truths.

After the indictment had been read to him, the duke of Norfolk said to More, *you see now how grievously you have offended his majesty. Yet he is so merciful, that if you will lay aside your obstinacy and change your opinion, we hope you may obtain pardon of his highness.*

* Pole.

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To this, continues the great-grandson, the *stout champion of Christ* replied, *most noble lords, I have great cause to thank your honours for this your courtesy. But I beseech Almighty God, that I may continue in the mind I am in, through his grace, unto death.*

For the former part of More's defence we are indebted to Stapleton, from whose Latin we will translate the knight's words.

'When I recollect the length of my accusation, and the weight of what is objected against me, I am apprehensive that my understanding, my memory, and my power of utterance, may fail me in making due answer to the whole; so am I still affected by the bodily weakness which I have suffered from my imprisonment.'

Here a seat was ordered to be brought the knight. Having seated himself, he thus proceeded.

'There be four divisions, if I mistake not, of my indictment; which I will answer in order.

'To the FIRST, that I was averse to his majesty's second marriage, I candidly own, I ever disapproved this marriage to the king. Nor am I now inclined to say or think otherwise of it than I have done, for the dictate of my conscience is still the same. This dictate I was neither inclined of my own accord to conceal from his majesty, nor ought

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I to have done so when the truth was demanded of me; and no suspicion of treason can on this occasion attach itself to me. On the contrary, being asked a question of such moment by my prince, on which his honour and the tranquility of his kingdom depended, had I spoken with more regard to compliance with his wishes than to truth, I should then with justice have been accused of what I am now accused, of malevolence, wickedness, treachery.

'But even for this fault of mine, if it be a fault in man to speak the truth to his prince when he asks it, I have already suffered severe punishment. I have been proscribed from all intercourse with mankind, and continually immured in prison for nearly fifteen months.

'A SECOND head of my indictment is, that I am amenable to punishment for the violation of an act of parliament. For, when in prison, of my malevolence, wickedness, treachery, I sought to detract from the honour due to his majesty as recognised by that act in his new title, *supreme head on earth of the church of England.*

'What opinion did I utter regarding this act, when twice questioned in prison by Mr. Secretary and others of his majesty's council, that I should be said to have detracted from, or to have denied, this new authority? I would give no other answer than, that the act, just or unjust, pertained not to me, who was dead in law, and was no longer bound to answer to statutes which I should never more use;

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yet that neither by word or deed had I ever done anything derogatory to the act, and therefore I could not with justice be condemned for a law against which it could not be objected to me that I had either acted or spoken; that, rejecting every other care, I wished to turn my thoughts for the time to come to the bitter passion of my Saviour, and to my own passage from this life.

'I own I made this answer. But I maintain that this law or act was by no means violated by such answer, nor any capital offence committed by it. Neither your laws, nor those of the whole world, can criminate mere silence. They are made for words and actions; God alone can judge of secret thoughts.'

Here the king's counsel remarked, that More's silence was a sure sign of his evil disposition and a certain proof of his malice; for no man in the kingdom well-affected toward his majesty, being interrogated as to this act, would refuse to declare his opinion categorically.

'My silence,' replied More, 'is neither a sign of any evil disposition in me, as his majesty may know by many proofs, neither doth it bear any conviction of a breach of your law. It is to be taken for assent rather than dissent, witness the lawyers' phrase, *who is silent seemeth to consent*. As to your inference respecting the duty of a good subject from the example of all England, I am of opinion, that it is the duty of such a one, unless he would be a bad chris-

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tian at the same time that he is a good subject, to obey God rather than man; to have more care of his conscience and the preservation of his soul, than of any other thing whatever. Especially when, which is certainly my case, his conscience is such, as to produce not the smallest offence, no scandal, no sedition to his prince. For I solemnly affirm, that I never opened this conscience of mine to any mortal living.'

'I come now to the THIRD head of my indictment. By which I am accused, against the constitution of my my country, to have violated an act of parliament; having maliciously endeavoured, wickedly contrived, and treacherously practised, so saith the indictment, to interchange eight letters in prison with the bishop of Rochester, wherein I persuaded him against this law and incited him to oppose it.

'I earnestly desire that these letters may be produced and read, for they will either condemn or acquit me. But since you say that the bishop burnt them, I will not hesitate to repeat to you what they contained. Some of them were full of our private affairs and related to our old and intimate friendship. One contained my answer to his letter of inquiry, what reply I had made in prison to the king's counsellors on this new subject. To this I made no other answer, than that I had made-up my own mind, and he might make-up his. So God love me and preserve my soul as I wrote him nothing else, and as God is my witness

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this and nothing else is the truth! Thus is there nothing in this instance neither which I have committed, contrary to law and worthy of death.

'The FOURTH and last allegation against me is, that when I was examined concerning this law in prison, I said, it was like a two-edged sword; who opposed it destroyed his body, who consented to it, confounded his soul. From which kind of answer, because the bishop of Rochester likewise made it, it was asserted that we had evidently conspired in the matter.

'I answer that this expression was more qualified on my part. Namely, that I said, in either case there was danger, whether I approved or disapproved the law, and therefore it was like a two-edged sword, which wielded cutteth both ways; and the condition seemed peculiarly severe in extending to myself, who contradicted it neither by word nor deed. These were *my* words; how the bishop answered I know not. If his reasoning agreed with mine, it hath arisen from no collusion, but rather from our similar thoughts and studies. In short, ye may rest satisfied, that I have never spoken to any mortal living against this constitution, although perhaps some false reports may have been made on the subject to the king's most merciful majesty.'

Though no farther answer was now made to More, the word *malice*, saith his great-grandson, was in the mouth of the whole court. And as a final proof of the knight's guilt,

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Rich was now called, to relate upon oath the conversation which we have already noticed. Mr. Roper hath preserved the answer of More upon this occasion in his very words, as reported to him by credible eye witnesses.

'If I was a man my lords,' said the knight, 'who did not regard an oath, I needed not, as it is well known, stand in this place, and at this time, nor in this case, as an accused person. And if this oath of yours Mr. Rich be true, then I pray *that I never see God in the face*, which I would not say were it otherwise, to win the whole world.'

Here More gave the court the true account of his conversation with Rich in the Tower; and then he proceeded thus.

'In good faith, Mr. Rich, I am sorrier for your perjury, than for mine own peril. And you shall understand, that neither I, nor no man else to my knowledge, ever took you to be a man of such credit, as, in any matter of importance, I, or any other, would at any time vouchsafe to communicate with you. And I, as you know, of no small while have been acquainted with you and your conversation, who have known you from your youth hitherto, for we long dwelt together in one parish. Where, as yourself can tell (I am sorry you compel me so to say) you were esteemed very light of your tongue, a great dicer, and of no commendable fame. And so, in your house at the

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Temple, where hath been your chief bringing-up, were you likewise accounted.

'Can it therefore seem likely to your honourable lordships, that I would in so weighty a cause so unadvisedly overshoot myself, as to trust Mr. Rich, a man of me alway reputed of little truth as your lordships have heard, so far above my sovereign lord the king or any of his noble counsellors, that I would unto him utter the secrets of my conscience touching the king's supremacy, the special point and only mark at my hands so long sought-for, a thing which I never did nor never would, after the statute thereof made, reveal unto the king's highness himself, or to any of his honourable counsellors, as it is not unknown unto your honours, at sundry several times sent from his own person to the Tower to me, for none other purpose? Can this, in your judgment my lords, seem likely to be true?

'And yet, if I had so done indeed, my lords, as Mr. Rich hath sworn, seeing it was spoken but in secret familiar talk, nothing affirming, and only in putting of cases, without other displeasant circumstances, it cannot justly be taken to be spoken *maliciously*. And where there is no malice, there can be no offence. And over this, I can never think my lords, that so many worthy bishops, so many honourable personages, and so many other worshipful, virtuous, wise, and learned men, as at the making of that law were in that parliament assembled, ever meant to have any man punished by death in whom there could be

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found no malice; taking *malitia* for *malevolentia*. For if *malitia* be generally taken for *sin*, no man is there then who can excuse himself; *quia si dixerimus quod peccatum non habemus, nosmet ipsos seducemus et veritas in nobis non est*. And moreover this word *maliciously* is in this statute material; as the term *forcible* is in the statute of *forcible entresse*. By which statute, if a man enter peaceably and put not his adversaries out *forcibly*, it is no offence; but if he put them out *forcibly*, then by the statute it is an offence, and so shall he be punished by this term *forcibly*.

'Beside this, the manifold goodness of the king's highness himself,—who hath been so many ways my singular good lord, and who hath so dearly loved and trusted me; even at my very first coming into his honourable service, to the dignity of his honourable privy council vouchsafing to admit me, and to offices of great credit and worship most liberally advancing me; and finally, with the weighty room of his grace's high chancellor (the like whereof he never did to temporal man before), next to his own royal person the highest officer in this noble realm, so far above my qualities or merits able and meet therefore, of his own incomparable benignity honouring and exalting me; by the space of twenty years and more shewing his continual favour toward me; and (until at mine own poor suit it pleased his highness, giving me licence with his majesty's favour to bestow the residue of my life for the provision of my soul in the service of God, of his special goodness to discharge and disburthen me), most benignly heaping ho-

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nours continually more and more upon me,——all this his highness' goodness I say, so long thus continually extended toward me, were in my mind, my lords, matter sufficient to convince this slanderous surmise, by this man so wrongfully imagined against me.'

Rich now desired that his companions, Southwell and Palmer, should be examined relative to his conversation with More. When they had been sworn they either of them deposed, that being employed in conveying away the knight's books as they had been ordered, they paid no attention to the conversation which was passing.

The jury, however, speedily found More GUILTY; and the chancellor, More's immediate successor, was proceeding, as chief commissioner, with no less hasty servility to pronounce judgment upon him, when the knight observed, that in his time it was customary in such a case, to ask the prisoner before judgment, what he could say why judgment should not be given against him. The chancellor hereupon demanded of More what he was able to say in this instance to the contrary? and More, according to Mr. Roper, thus replied to him.

'Forasmuch, my lords, as this indictment is grounded upon an act of parliament directly repugnant to the laws of God and his holy church,—the supreme government whereof, or any part thereof, may no temporal prince presume by any law to take upon him, as rightfully belonging

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to the see of Rome, a spiritual pre-eminence, by the mouth of our Saviour himself, personally present upon the earth, only to S^t^. Peter and his successors, bishops of the same see, by special prerogative granted —— it is therefore, in law, among christian men, insufficient to charge any christian man.'

The knight added, that as the city of London could not make a law against an act of parliament which bound the whole realm, neither could this realm make a particular law incompatible with the general law of Christ's universal catholic church; that it was contrary to the unrepealed statutes of the country, for, by Magna Charta, *ecclesia Anglicana, libra sit, et habeat omnia sua jura integra et illæsa*; that it was contrary also to the oath taken by Henry and every other christian prince at his coronation; that no more might England refuse obedience to the see of Rome, than a child to its natural father —— 'for, as S^t^. Paul said to the Corinthians, *I have regenerated ye my children in Christ*, so might S^t^. Gregory, pope of Rome (since by S^t^. Augustin, his messenger, we first received the christian faith), of us Englishmen truly say, *ye are my children, because I have, under Christ, given to ye everlasting salvation, a far higher and better inheritance than any carnal father can leave to his children, and by regeneration have made ye spiritual children in Christ.*'

The chancellor here repeated the old remark, that since the bishops, universities, and best learned had subscribed

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to the act, it was wonderful that he alone would oppose them all and argue so strongly against it.

'If the number of bishops and universities be so material,' replied More, 'as your lordship seemeth to take it, then see I little cause, my lord, why that thing in my conscience should make any change. For I nothing doubt, but that, though not in this realm, yet in christendom about, of those well-learned bishops and virtuous men who be yet alive, they be not the fourth part who be of your opinion therein. But if I should speak of those who be dead, of whom many be now holy saints in heaven, I am very sure it is the far greater part of them, who, all the while they lived thought in this case that way which I now think. And therefore am I not bound, my lord, to conform my conscience to the counsel of our realm, against the general counsel of christendom.'

The chancellor at length asked the opinion of the chief-justice, if the indictment were sufficient. Fitz-james replied with his usual oath, *my lords all, by S^t. Julian, I must needs confess, that if the act of parliament be not unlawful, then is the indictment in my conscience good.* An answer upon which More's great-grandson remarketh, that it resembled that of the Scribes and Pharisees to Pilate; *if this man were not a malefactor, we would never have delivered him unto you.*

The chancellor now proceeded to pronounce the usual

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sentence of hanging, drawing, and quartering; for which Henry VIII hath been pronounced by Paulus Jovius, a second Phalaris. In consideration, however, of the high offices which More had filled, this sentence was afterward mitigated to *beheading*; a subject which still afforded the undismayed knight an opportunity of jesting. *God forbid*, he said, *that the king should use any more such mercy unto any of my friends, and God bless all my posterity from such pardons.**

If we may credit Stapleton, More said after his judgment was passed, that since he stood condemned, how justly God knew, to disburthen his conscience he would now freely speak what he thought of the late proceedings. When he perceived that the state of this kingdom required the investigation whence the power of the Roman pontiff was derived, he directed his attention and study for seven whole years to the subject. But to this day could he never discover in any learned writer approved by the church, that a layman ever had been, or ever could be, head of the church.

The chancellor is said here again to have remarked, that the knight arrogated to himself more wisdom and integrity than the whole realm beside; and More again to have replied, that against one bishop he could name him an hundred, and against one realm the consent of all christendom for more than a thousand years. *Now Sir Thomas*, exclaim-

* More.

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ed the duke of Norfolk, *you shew your malice;* to which More answered, that he only discharged his conscience.*

The commissioners now offered More a favourable hearing, if he had anything farther to offer in his defence.

'More have I not to say my lords,' replied the knight, 'but that, like as the blessed apostle St. Paul, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, was present and consented to the death of St. Stephen, and kept their clothes who stoned him to death,—and yet be they now both twain holy saints in heaven, and shall continue there friends together for ever —— so I verily trust, and shall therefore right heartily pray, that though your lordships have now here on earth been judges to my condemnation, we may yet hereafter in heaven all meet together, to everlasting salvation.†

Thus did the knight receive the sentence of condemnation with that equal temper of mind which he had discovered in either condition of life; and he now devoted himself wholly to prepare for death, which we shall find proved little terrible to him.

Sir William Kingston, a tall, strong, and comely knight (as Mr. Roper calls him), and More's very dear friend, attended the knight, as constable of the Tower, on his return thither. At the Old Swan, with a heavy heart, tears running down his cheeks, he wished More farewell.

* More. † Roper.

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'Sir Thomas More,' continues Mr. Roper, 'seeing him so sorrowful, comforted him with as good words as he could, saying, *good Mr. Kingston, trouble not yourself, but be of good cheer. For I will pray for you and my good lady your wife, that we may meet in heaven together, where we shall be merry for ever and ever.* Soon afterward, Sir William Kingston, talking with me of Sir Thomas More, said, *in good faith Mr. Roper I was ashamed of myself, that, at my departing from your father, I found my heart so feeble, and his so strong, that he was fain to comfort me, who should rather have comforted him.*'

A scene yet more tender occurred before the knight reached the Tower, and which appeareth not unworthy of the artist's pencil. His affectionate daughter Margaret, fearing that this would be her last opportunity of seeing her dear father in this world, awaited his coming, at the Tower-wharf, and on his approach, pressed forward to him with an ardour nearly frantic, which neither the crowd nor his guards could restrain. Having reached him, she clung round his neck and kissed him, with the utmost ardour of filial affection. More seemed pleased with her manner, and blessed and comforted her. After she had gone from him, she was again seized with the same enthusiasm, and returned once more to re-act the same tender scene, amid the tears of many of the spectators. The knight's son, it appears, also presented himself to his father and asked his blessing.*

* Roper and More.

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Between More's condemnation and the execution of his sentence, about a week intervened; which he passed in prayer, and in such discipline as his persuasion induced him to believe would tend to his acceptance with his Maker.* Yet his usual facetiousness in worldly affairs forsook him not even at this awful crisis.

A *light-headed courtier*, as More's great-grandson calls him, having come to the knight, not to talk *of serious matters* but to urge him *to change his mind*, Sir Thomas, wearied by his impertinence and importunity, at last replied *I have changed it.* The report of this soon reached the king, and More was commanded to explain himself. The knight now rebuked the courtier for troubling his majesty with what he spoke in jest; his meaning he said was, that whereas he purposed to have been shaved, that he might appear as usual at his execution, he had now *changed his mind*, and his beard should share the fate of his head.

Two of More's last letters, written with a coal, are preserved in the volume of his English works. The former is in Latin, to Mr. Anthony Bonvyse, a rich merchant, who appears to have been an old and constant friend of the knight, and of whose kindness this is his last grateful acknowledgment; adding after his signature Thomas Morus, *frustra fecero si adjiciam tuus, nam hoc jam nescire non potes quum tot beneficiis emeris, nec ego nunc talis sum ut referat cujus sim.* The latter, to his daughter Margaret, was writ-

* See More.

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1535. ten on July 5th 1535, the very day before his execution, and is here presented to the reader.

Sir Thomas More to Mrs. Roper.

'Our Lord bless you good daughter, and your good husband, and your little boy, and all yours; and all my children, and all my god-children and all our friends.

'Recommend me when you may to my good daughter Cicily, whom I beseech our Lord to comfort! and I send her my blessing, and to all her children, and pray her to pray for me. I send her an handkerchief; and God comfort my good son her husband!

'My good daughter Daunce hath the picture in parchment which you delivered me from my Lady Coniers; her name is on the back side. Shew her that I heartily pray her, that you may send it in my name to her again, for a token from me to pray for me.

'I like special well Dorothy Coly. I pray you be good unto her! I would wit whether this be she whom you wrote me of? If not, yet I pray you be good to the other, as you may in her affliction, and to my god-daughter Joan Aleyn too. Give her, I pray you, some kind answer; for she sued hither to me this day, to pray you be good to her.

'I cumber you, good Margaret, much; but I would be

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sorry if it should be any longer than to-morrow. For it is S^t^. Thomas even, and the Utas of S^t^. Peter; and therefore to-morrow long I to go to God,—it were a day very meet and convenient for me. I never liked your manner toward me better than when you kissed me last; for I love when daughterly love and dear charity hath no leisure to look to worldly courtesy. Farewell my dear child and pray for me; and I shall for you and all your friends, that we may merrily meet in heaven. I thank you for your great cost.

'I send now to my god-daughter Clement her algorism stone; and I send her, and my god-son, and all hers, God's blessing and mine. I pray you, at time convenient, recommend me to my goodson, John More. I liked well his natural fashion. Our Lord bless him and his good wife my loving daughter! to whom I pray him be good, as he hath great cause; and that if the land of mine come to his hand, he break not my will concerning his sister Daunce. And our Lord bless Thomas and Austin* and all that they shall have.'

* * * * * * * * * *

For the reasons which he gives in this letter, it was probably at More's particular request, that the following day was that fixed upon for his execution. Early in the morning of Tuesday July 6^th^ 1535, his friend Sir Thomas Pope came to him with a message from the king and council,

* John More's children.

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that he should suffer death on that morning before nine of the clock, and that he might prepare himself accordingly.

'Mr. Pope,' said Sir Thomas, 'for your good tidings I heartily thank you. I have been alway much bounden to the king's highness for the benefits and honours which he hath still, from time to time, most bountifully heaped upon me. And yet more bounden am I to his grace, for putting me into this place, where I have had convenient time and space to have remembrance of my end. And, so God help me! most of all, Mr. Pope, am I bounden to his highness, that it pleaseth him so shortly to rid me from the miseries of this wretched world. And therefore will I not fail, earnestly to pray for his grace, both here and also in the world to come.'

'The king's pleasure is farther,' added Pope, 'that at your execution you shall not use many words.'

'Mr. Pope,' replied More, 'you do well to give me warning of his grace's pleasure; for otherwise, at that time, had I purposed somewhat to have spoken, but of no matter wherewith his grace, or any, should have had cause to be offended. Nevertheless, whatsoever I intended, I am ready obediently to conform myself to his grace's commandment; and I beseech you, good Mr. Pope, to be a mean to his highness, that my daughter Margaret may be at my burial.'

'The king is content already,' said Pope, that your wife

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and children, and other your friends, shall have liberty to be present thereat.'

'O! how much beholden then,' said More, 'am I unto his grace, who unto my poor burial vouchsafeth to have so gracious consideration.'*

It was not without reason that Henry's command, *he should not use many words*, accompanied the message of death. He was not ignorant of More's ability as a public speaker, and how great his authority was among the people. He was sensible too of the provocation which he had given his prisoner; and, judging the knight's temper by his own, he feared that he should be treated with the most vindictive and offensive freedom. But the subject on this occasion proved too good for his prince; and the circumstance only serves to add to our contempt of Henry's conduct.

Pope now took leave of More, and could not refrain from tears.

'Quiet yourself good Mr. Pope,' said More, 'and be not discomforted; for I trust that we shall once in heaven see each other full merrily, where we shall be sure to live and love together in joyful bliss eternally.'

More now put-on his best clothes: which, when the lieutenant of the Tower saw, he advised him to take them

* Roper.

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off again, saying he was but a rascal who should have them.

'What, Mr. Lieutenant,' said the knight, 'shall I account him a rascal who shall do me this day so singular a benefit? Nay, I assure you, were it cloth of gold I should think it well bestowed on him, as S^t^. Cyprian did, who gave his executioner thirty pieces of gold.'

The lieutenant, however, persuaded him to re-change his dress. Yet, of the little money which was left to him, the knight sent his executioner an angel.*

At the appointed time, he was conducted from his prison by the lieutenant of the Tower to the place of execution; *his beard being long*, says his great-grandson, *his face pale and lean, carrying in his hands a red cross, casting his eyes often toward heaven.* Yet his facetiousness remained to the last, of which three instances are related to have passed, even upon the scaffold. On ascending this structure, he found it so weak that it was ready to fall; upon which he said to the lieutenant, *I pray see me up safe, and for my coming down let me shift for myself.* As Henry had so prudently imposed silence upon him at this time, More only desired of his spectators that they would pray for him, and bear witness that he there suffered death in and for the faith of the catholic church.†

* Roper. † Roper.

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This said, he knelt, and repeated a psalm with great devotion; perhaps the 51st, the 56th, or the 57th. He then rose cheerfully, and the executioner asking his forgiveness, More kissed him and said, *thou wilt do me this day a greater benefit, than ever any mortal man can be able to give me. Pluck-up thy spirit, man, and be not afraid to do thy office. My neck is very short; take heed therefore that thou strike not awry, for saving thy honesty.* When he laid his head upon the block, he desired the executioner to wait till he had removed his beard, *for that had never committed treason.* 'So with great alacrity and spiritual joy,' adds his great-grandson, 'he received the fatal blow of the axe; which no sooner had severed the head from the body, but his soul was carried by angels into everlasting glory, where a crown of martyrdom was put upon him which can never fade nor decay.'

More's behaviour in this last scene hath been censured by some as light and indecent, and partaking more of the stoic than of the christian. The more candid, however, have allowed that that manner having been so natural to him on all occasions, it was not peculiar upon this; but proved that death by no means discomposed him, and could not even put him out of his ordinary humour.

His head remained for some time fixed upon a pole on London-bridge, until the piety of his daughter Margaret found an opportunity of purchasing it. She is said to have preserved it in a leaden box, and to have ordered its inter-

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ment with her own body in the Roper-vault, under a chapel adjoining St. Dunstan's, Canterbury.* His body was buried in the chapel of St. Peter in the Tower, probably near bishop Fisher, who, like More, had appointed himself a tomb in his lifetime, which his body never occupied. Some of our antiquaries have asserted that More's body was afterward removed to Chelsea by his daughter Margaret; but this is by no means satisfactorily made out, and appears to be improbable for more reasons than one.

* More and Wood.

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CHAP. VI.

Anecdote.... Queen Ann and Cranmer indolent in More's cause.... Effects of More's execution.... Sentiments of the Emperor Charles, Cardinal Pole, and Paulus Jovius.... More's religion, bigotry, &c. .... Not so extravagant as some, in his notions of the papal power. .... His propensity to jesting, and witty sayings.... His behaviour at his death natural.... His disinterestedness, and integrity while chancellor, and virtue as a patriot minister.... Queen Catharine's opinion of More.... His greatness of mind, excellent temper, and good management of his family.... Other traits of his character. .... His learning, modesty, and benevolence.... His Utopia, History of Richard III, epigrams, letters, and controversial writings.... Burnet's character of him as a writer.... The editions of More's English and Latin works.... His personal peculiarities.... His family.... Erasmus' encomium on More's house.... Mrs. Roper.... Her letter to her father in prison.... Her daughter Basset.... More's letter to Gonellus.... The death of Erasmus and view of his character.... More's remonstrances with him misrepresented.

It is said that when Henry received the report of More's execution he was playing at draughts, and Queen Ann was looking-on. Casting his eyes upon her, he said *thou art the*

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cause of this man's death; and soon afterward he left the game. He betook himself, it is added, to his chamber, and fell into a fit of melancholy.*

Whatever credit may be due to this anecdote, those writers who assert that Ann was instrumental to More's execution, have probably been guided by it. Yet she was perhaps rather an approver of the execution than an instigator to it; for it is certain that the temper of her consort, irritable and impetuous as it was, seldom stood in need of instigation to lead it to extremities.

After having opposed the divorce and second marriage, More became an opponent of what was then termed heresy; of which Ann was a patron. If then only to remove an enemy to herself and her cause, we have no reason to doubt that the queen's voice was in favour of the execution. Nay, if she found the king at any time wavering in his resolution, she may have endeavoured to confirm him in it, and thus have given ground to Henry, in the first moments of his uneasiness, to charge her with having caused the knight's death.

Cranmer, as well as Ann, had, we know, very considerable influence on Henry's purposes; and had they now exerted all this influence, they might perhaps have saved More's life. But it is pretty clear that the queen never made such an attempt, or Henry could not have reproach-

* More.

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ed her in this manner; and it is too probable that neither her majesty nor the bishop used *every* endeavour in their power to prevent an execution, which fixes an indelible odium upon all the reformers who consented to it.

We have at least very ample testimonies remaining to us, that the sacrifice of More made an impression, far beyond the limits of his own country, and of deeper stamp than it hath often been in the power of an individual to leave, who, like More, hath been conspicuous chiefly by his virtues in civil life. Many learned of christendom, protestants as well as catholics, who neither feared Henry as their tyrant, nor hated him from private motives of animosity, have animadverted strongly on the cruelty of the knight's execution.

Upon his friend Dr. Lark, at that time rector of Chelsea, More's death is said to have had so much influence, that he soon afterward suffered death also, for denying the king's supremacy.*

Mr. Roper relates, that when the emperor Charles received intelligence of More's execution, he sent for Sir Thomas Eliott, the English ambassador at his court, and said to him, *we understand that the king your master hath put his faithful and grave counsellor to death.* Eliott replied, he knew nothing of the matter. *Well*, said the emperor, *it is too true. And this will we say; that had we*

* More and Stow.

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been master of such a servant (of whose doings ourselves have had these many years no small experience), we would rather have lost the best city of our dominions, than have lost such a worthy counsellor. This anecdote, Mr. Roper adds, Sir Thomas Eliott reported to himself, to his wife, and to other friends.

Cardinal Pole, to whom Italy, notwithstanding his relationship to Henry, was the seat of safety, in his book *pro unitate ecclesiastica*, written in answer to Dr. Sampson's justification, by royal authority, of Henry's proceedings, compares More's death to that of Socrates. *I have seen*, saith Pole, *even the greatest strangers, who never knew him, never shared his favour, so much affected by his death, that when they read the history of it, they could not withhold their tears; and they wept at the fame only of his fate. And I at this distance, when writing of his death, although I was not bound to him by any private ties, but loved and esteemed him rather for his virtue and probity, and because I knew his service to his country, yet God is my witness that I shed involuntary tears, which so impede my pen and blot my letters, that I proceed with difficulty.**

Erasmus, without naming Henry, remarks on the occasion, Plato went unhurt by the Æginans, Diogenes by Philip of Macedon; Antony is hated for the murder of Cicero; Nero for the death of Socrates.†

* Lib. iii. † Epist. Nucer.

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We will add one, among many more similar testimonies, by Paulus Jovius, in his own words.

'Fortuna impotens, et suo more instabilis, infaustaque virtuti, si unquam superbe et truculenter jocata est, sub Henrico VIII nuper in Britannia immanissime desæviit; prostrato ante oculos Th. Moro, quem rex, paulo ante, præclarus, eximiæ virtutis admirator, ad summos honores extulerat, ut inde eum, fatali oborta insania mutatus in feram, crudeli mox impetu præcipitem daret, quod ipsius furentis tyranni nefariæ libidini, vir omnibus religionis atque justitiæ numeris longe optimus atque sanctissimus, adulari noluisset. Dum enim ille uxorem repudiare, pellicem inducere, filiamque (Mariam) magno probro abdicare properaret, Morus, scrinii magister, pietatis ac innocentiæ suæ reus, causam ad tribunal dicere coactus, impio judicio ita damnatus est, uti latronum more, teterrimo supplicii genere, necaretur; nec fas esset dilacerata membra, propinquorum pietate, sepelire. Sed Henricus, vel hoc uno facinore Phalaridis æmulus, eripere non potuit, quin ad sempiternam inusitati sceleris memoriam Mori nomen in Utopia perenni constantiæ laude frueretur.'*

The features of More's character are too strongly marked and prominent, to permit us to have gone thus far into the memoirs of his life, without being pretty fully acquainted with it. In a general view, however, of the biography of even so peculiar a character as this, some traits will be

* Elog. doct. viror.

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found to have less strongly impressed our attention as we proceeded, than the weight and worth of them may on a closer view appear to demand; and we may here be allowed to devote a few pages to a more particular review of certain points in that which is under our present consideration.

More's religion naturally presents itself as a prominent feature on this occasion; in reference to which he hath been pronounced a very priest, and that here his faculties were so enveloped, as to render him a weak and credulous enthusiast.

The assertion may perhaps, however, be allowed to be little hazardous, that More's bigotry hath proved a foil to his character, and that without it, he might have appeared less interesting on the whole in the eye of posterity. Born, as he had the misfortune to be, in an age of ignorance and superstition, at the very dawn of learning in our island, his ideas of religion, as well as those of his contemporaries, naturally partook of the times in which he lived. And to those times, and to the genius of the superstition in which he had been educated, we may very clearly attribute this part of the knight's character.

Erasmus saith of More in one place, that he was rather superstitious than irreligious, and in another place, that he was extremely remote from all superstition.

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It hath frequently been remarked of the knight also, that in his youth he was free from that degree of bigotry, which grew upon him as he advanced in years.

Yet we know that such was his addiction early in life to monkish discipline, that he wore secretly a hair-shirt next his skin, frequently fasted, slept on a bare plank, and sometimes even scourged himself. These practices he continued even when he was chancellor, though, as Mr. Roper informs us, *he would appear like other men in his apparel and outward behaviour*. His daughter Margaret was his sole confidant in these peculiarities. She was in the habit of washing with her own hands this hair-shirt for her father, and he sent it to her the day before his execution.*

'His accustomed manner alway was,' saith Mr. Roper, ere he entered into any matter of importance, as when he was first chosen of the privy-council, when he was sent ambassador, appointed speaker of the parliament-house, made chancellor, or when he took any other like weighty matter upon him, to go to church to be confessed, to hear mass and be houseled.'

The great-grandson adds, that being once sent for by the king upon urgent business while he was at mass, More refused to stir till it was over, saying *he must first serve God and then the king*. With which conduct, we are farther informed, that Henry had the merit to be pleased.

* Roper and More.

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The private devotions of More, as well at home as in his chapel, were also observed with the strictest regularity. His family and servants were required to participate in them daily, and with peculiar attention upon particular occasions. These observances appear to have brought those blessings upon his household, to which the true piety of them was entitled. *A marked good fortune*, saith Erasmus, *attends the servants of that house.* And his biographers have gone so far as to assert, that the prayers of the knight, when his favourite daughter was at the point of death in the sweating sickness, produced the happy effect of suggesting to his mind a remedy, which very unexpectedly led to the re-establishment of her health.

Although a part of More's piety may have been in compliance with the manners of the age, it is sufficiently evident that he had a natural propensity to devotion. This, with all the virtues of christianity in his deportment, gave a pleasing uniformity to his public and private life. And before we decide that his austerity, under the notion of religion, derogated from his general good sense, let us advert once more to the times in which he lived, soon after the resurrection of letters, when ignorance of scripture and bigotry to the catholic church had overspread the world. More inflicted not his penances upon himself with the absurd view of commuting them for wilful vices; his *intentions* were certainly good, and all that we have to excuse is, his *manner* of complying with his religion. It is true that he appears to have had different sentiments in his

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youth when he wrote his Utopia, and we are nowhere informed why he thought more superstitiously afterward; but we must remember that were there no shades in this great character, it would no longer be that of man. Burnet observes of this conduct in More, that it can only be accounted-for by ascribing it to the intoxicating charms of that religion, which can darken the clearest understandings and corrupt the best natures.

Notwithstanding More's strong prejudice against the king's supremacy, he was certainly not so extravagant as some were, in his notions of the papal power. In his Confutation of Tindal he writes, that he never considered the pope as a part of the definition of the church, but that he defined the church to be *the common known congregation of all christian nations, under one head the pope.* Nay, he afterward affirmeth that a general council is above the pope, and that *there are orders in Christ's church by which a pope may be both admonished and amended, and hath been for incorrigible mind and lack of amendment finally deposed and changed.** This is the very conclusion maintained by Wiclif, and which was condemned by the council of Constance. More seemeth to have thought that a pope was not of the essence of the visible church, but that that church might subsist without a pope, under the government of provincial patriarchs or archbishops.

* Eng. works, p. 615, 621.

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The maxim of Horace

——————— ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat?

was so stedfastly embraced by More, that his propensity to jesting hath frequently been censured by those, who had evidently a very small portion of his wit. One of our chroniclers, Hall, with more ill-nature than wit, hath even gone so far as to call him on this account *a wise foolish man, or a foolish wise man;* which severe sentence occasioned the following epigrams in vindication of the knight.

Η ἰμὶ μωροσοφὸν μὲν ἄν ἰἰπους ἢ σοφόμωρον,
Μῶρος γαρ κόσμω ἰιμὶ, σοφός τε Θεῶ.

Halle, tibi Morus stultus sapiensque videtur:
Stultus erat mundo nempe, Deo sapiens.

Wise foolish, foolish wise,
To More be titles given ——
Let earth the fool despise ——
His wisdom found him heaven.

We have the satisfaction to learn from a letter of his friend Erasmus, that More did not love an ill-natured jest which gave another person pain. It is also related of him, that he never laughed at his own jokes; but spoke on these occasions with so much gravity, that few could discover by his look whether he was jesting or serious.

The witty sayings attributed to More would form an ex-

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tensive collection, if we attempted to embrace all of them which are now extant. An instance or two, in addition to those which have already occurred to our notice, may here amuse the reader.

When one of the family of Manners said to More 'honores mutant *Mores*,' the knight readily retorted upon him, that it was true in English; for then it applied to *Manners*.

When a debtor to the knight, upon being asked to discharge his claim, expatiated on the uncertainty of this life, and the inutility of money in the grave, concluding pompously, *memento morieris*, More answered him, *memento Mori æris*.

When one of his friends brought More an ill-written work, to receive his opinion of it previously to its publication, the knight told him gravely *it would be better in verse*. The man took home his book, versified it, and brought it again to More. *Yea marry*, said the knight, *now it is somewhat, for now it is rhyme; before, it was neither rhyme nor reason*.

When an arrogant fellow at Bruges had given it out that he would answer whatever question could be proposed to him in any art whatever, More caused to be put-up *utrum averia capta in Withernamia sunt irreplegiabilia*; adding, that there was a person in the retinue of the English am-

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bassador who would dispute with him on the question. These law terms were worse than Coptic to the braggadocio; who knew not what reply to make, and was laughed at.

As to the following anecdote related by More's great-grandson, *sit fides penes auctores*. From what we have seen of the early acquaintance of More and Erasmus, the circumstances do not appear to be very probable.

It is reported that he who conducted Erasmus to England, contrived that More and he should first meet in London, at the lord mayor's table, neither of them knowing the other. At dinner-time they fell into argument, and Erasmus was so sharply opposed by More, that at last he exclaimed with some choler, *aut tu Morus es aut nullus*. More readily replied, *aut tu es Erasmus aut Diabolus*.

This story hath also been related thus. More being at the lord mayor's table, word was brought him that a foreigner inquired for him. As dinner was nearly over, the lord mayor ordered one of his officers to take care of the gentleman and give him what he liked best. The officer took Erasmus into the lord mayor's cellar, where he chose to eat oysters and drink wine (drawn, as the custom then was, into leathern jacks). On coming to More he saluted him in Latin.

More,—*Unde venis?*

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Erasmus,—*Ex inferis.*

More,—*Quid ibi agitur ?*

Eras.—*Vivis vescuntur et bibunt ex ocreis.*

More,—*An tu me noscis ?*

Eras.—*Aut tu es Morus aut nullus.*

More,—*Et tu es aut Deus aut Dæmon, aut meus Erasmus.*

One of More's ludicrous actions was, to employ a cut-purse to rob a justice while he sat on the bench, who had expressed an opinion that none except *careless fools* could be served so.

More was also delighted whenever he found wit in those with whom he conversed. Strype, who, as we have seen, hath repeated more than he could have proved of the knight's cruelty to the reformers, tells us, in his memorials, he had read in an old manuscript, that More, examining a protestant whose name was Silver, told him in his jesting way *silver must be tried in the fire. But quicksilver*, replied the culprit, *will not abide it.* With this ready answer, adds Strype, the knight was so delighted, that he dismissed him. And the anecdote certainly proves, against Strype's own hypothesis, that More's *cruelty* was at least not such, as to be propitiated with difficulty.

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More's behaviour in the last scene of this life, hath been censured by some as too light and ludicrous for the occasion. But the fact probably is, that this behaviour was so natural to him, and the consciousness of his integrity gave him such satisfaction and courage, that the scene was even less mournful to the criminal than to many of his spectators. M. de S^{t}. Evremont dwells on the courage and constancy of Petronius Arbiter in his last moments, and thinks he discovers in them more firmness and resolution, than in the deaths of Seneca, Cato, or even Socrates. Our own Addison hath observed on this, that if he was so pleased with gaiety of humour in a dying man, he might have found a much nobler instance of it in Sir Thomas More.

'This great and learned man,' observes that chaste and correct writer, 'was famous for enlivening his ordinary discourses with wit and pleasantry; and, as Erasmus tells him in an epistle dedicatory, acted in all parts of life like a second Democritus. He died upon a point of religion, and is respected as a martyr by that side for which he suffered. That innocent mirth which had been so conspicuous in his life, did not forsake him to the last. He maintained the same cheerfulness of heart upon the scaffold, which he used to shew at his table; and, upon laying his head on the block, gave instances of that good humour with which he had alway entertained his friends in the most ordinary occurrences. His death was of a piece with his life,—there was nothing in it new, forced or affected. He did not look upon the severing his head from his body as a circumstance

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which ought to produce any change in the disposition of his mind; and as he died under a fixed and settled hope of immortality, he thought any unusual degree of sorrow and concern improper on such an occasion as had nothing in it which could deject or terrify him. There is no great danger of imitation from this example,—men's natural fears will be a sufficient guard against it. I shall only observe, that what was philosophy in this extraordinary man, would be frenzy in one who doth not resemble him as well in the cheerfulness of his temper as in the sanctity of his life and manners.'*

More was charitable to the poor, he despised riches, and though he had opportunities, he had no inclination, to lay-up for himself treasures on earth. On his disinterestedness Mr. Roper in this manner expresseth himself. 'Thus did it, by his doings throughout the whole course of his life, appear, that all his travail and pains, without respect of earthly commodities either to himself or any of his, were only upon the service of God, the prince and the realm wholly bestowed and employed. Whom I heard in his latter time to say, that he never asked of the king for himself the value of a penny.'

Of his integrity when chancellor we can have no stronger proof, that that Henry had nothing to allege against him; and we can hardly entertain a doubt that the king would have embraced such an opportunity with alacrity in

* Spectator, N°. 349.

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More's adversity, had the knight afforded him one. Mr. Roper relates an instance or two of attempts to criminate him in this particular, all of which, we shall find, served only to fix more strongly the character of his integrity.

He had made a decree against Parnell at the suit of Vaughan, and was accused of having received a gilt cup, as a bribe, of Vaughan's wife. Being summoned before the council, More gravely confessed, *forasmuch as that cup was, long after the aforesaid decree, brought him for a new-year's gift, he, upon the importunate pressing upon him thereof, of courtesy refused not to take it.* Here Lord Wiltshire, Ann Boleyn's father, exclaimed in triumph, *Lo, did I not tell ye my lords that ye should find this matter true!* More desired their lordships, *as they had heard him courteously tell one part of his tale, they would vouchsafe of their honours indifferently to hear the other.* He then declared, that although he had indeed with much difficulty received the cup, yet immediately thereupon he caused his butler to fill it with wine and he drank to the lady. When she had pledged him, he gave her the cup again, that she might give it to her husband as a new-year's gift from him; and at his urgent request, though much against her will, she at last received it. Vaughan's wife, and other witnesses present, confirmed his statement.

Mrs. Croker, a widow, for whom with much difficulty he had made a decree in chancery against Lord Arundel, brought him for a new-year's gift a pair of gloves contain-

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ing forty pounds in angels. *Mistress*, said More, *since it were against good manners to forsake a gentlewoman's new-year's gift, I am content to take your gloves; but as for your money, I utterly refuse it.*

A Mr. Gresham also, having a cause depending in chancery, sent More a gilt cup, the fashion of which the knight greatly admired. He therefore ordered one of his own cups, which was inferior in beauty, yet superior in value, to be brought to him, and desired the messenger to present it to his master; on which condition alone he would receive the other.

Of More's confidence in his integrity, and his contempt of slander in his prosperity, Mr. Roper relates this instance. "The water bailif of London (sometime his servant) hearing, where he had been at dinner, certain merchants liberally to rail against his old master, waxed so discontented therewith, that he hastily came to him and told him what he had heard. *And were I, sir*, quoth he, *in such favour and authority with my prince as you are, such men surely should not be suffered so villainously and falsely to misreport and slander me. Wherefore I would wish you to call them before you, and to their shame for their lewd malice to punish them.*

More replied, with a smile, *why, Mr. Waterbailif, would you have me punish them by whom I receive more benefit than by you all who be my friends? Let them in God's name speak*

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as lewdly as they list of me, and shoot never so many arrows at me; as long as they do not hit me, what am I the worse? But if they should once hit me, then would it indeed a little trouble me. Howbeit I trust, by God's help, there shall none of them once be able to touch me,—I have more cause, I assure you Mr. Waterbailif, to pity them, than to be angry with them.

More appears in fact, either by nature or religion, to have attained to so correct a conduct, that neither the hope of profit or popularity, nor the fear of loss or of evil tongues, could allure or deter him in his duty. In all his fortunes, good and bad, he seems still to have enjoyed one and the same equability. In his mind, no minister who was innocent of a charge alleged against him, would treat his accusers with insolence or persecute them with power. Instead of exercising his authority, when he had it, in crushing or even silencing those who opposed or slandered him, he thought, that when their arrows did not hit him he received more benefit from them than from the caresses of his friends.

And here let us pay the tribute of respect so justly due to More's early and disinterested public virtue as a patriot minister. In him we have an instance of a man of the first abilities in the kingdom, who, without patrimony or any other subsistence than that derived from his profession, had the courage and integrity to oppose the measures of the king and his ministers, when he deemed those measures

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prejudicial to his country. And this in a reign, in which such opposition, so far from being customary or conducive to advancement, was seldom seen, and almost as seldom went unpunished.

His motive too, was solely to prevent oppression and injustice; and no bribe or advancement could bring him to change his conduct, as is too often done, and promote the measures which he had before condemned. When places were conferred upon him without his solicitation, he still retained his integrity to his country, though his prince was one of the most impatient of contradiction that ever filled our throne. The idea, as well as name, of patriot, sunk not in him so soon as he had attained to affluence; nor did he crowd the posts of public service with his relatives. Neither wavering between the measures of the king and people, nor, under colour of serving his country, intending only to acquire power and promote private interest, patriotism shone in him with a real lustre, not, as it too commonly doth, with a temporary and uncertain blaze.

Queen Catharine used to say, that Henry had only one sound counsellor in his kingdom, and that was More; the rest either spoke as the king would have them, or were inferior to More in judgment; and as for Wolsey, who was then the first subject in the realm, to answer his own ends he cared not what counsel he gave the king.*

* More.

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The dignity which More had borne with so much temper, he resigned with unfeigned joy. Although he might not have objected to have seen the pope's illegal jurisdiction in England cut off, and therefore might go cheerfully along with the suit of Præmunire, yet when he perceived how far the king's designs went, and that a total rupture was likely to follow, he retired from office with a greatness of mind hardly inferior to what the ancient philosophers have pretended on similar occasions. The *cause* too of the king's divorce he might think just, and therefore favour it while it was agitated at Rome; but when he saw a breach with that court likely to follow, he at once relinquished his lofty station. His retirement to private life might have been deemed a fall great enough; and the extent to which Henry carried his resentment on this occasion, is certainly one of the foulest reproaches of his reign.*

But More's sentiments were those of a mind sublimed above all feelings of sense. Liberty, riches, nay, even life, were dross in his esteem, compared with peace of conscience and eternal salvation. Christian and philosopher, he viewed the objects of sense with supreme indifference, and having set his affections most stedfastly on the things above, he ardently desired his translation to them. His great example affords us a very superior lesson of fortitude under suffering for conscience sake, of contempt of a life of flesh in itself short and transitory, and of resignation to

* See Burnet.

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the will of heaven under the most trying afflictions of humanity.

Mr. Roper informs us that in the sixteen years during which he was an inhabitant of his father-in-law's house, he did not once see More in *a fume*. Margaret Gigs, who was brought-up with More's children, said that she sometimes committed a fault for the purpose of hearing Sir Thomas chide her, he did it in so grave, and at the same time in so moderate, so loving, and so compassionate a manner. Erasmus likewise informs us of his intimate friend, *comitate totam familiam moderatur, in qua nulla tragœdia, nulla rixa.* And though More was obliged to maintain many servants, he is said never to have suffered any of them to be idle. He ever invented and assigned some avocation or other to each of them when they were not attendant upon him, that they might avoid sloth, gaming, and those profligate habits in general of which idleness is the source.*

Should any incline to infer that More at any period of his life became austere and splenetic, given wholly to devotion and philosophy, and without amusement or a taste for pleasure, they will greatly misconceive his character. His pleasures, it is true, were innocent and rational, becoming a christian and a philosopher; yet he had a heart for friendship and conviviality, and for every social feeling of our nature. ' Some,' Erasmus writes in one of his letters to More, ' take great care not to be cheated by coun-

* More.

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terfeit jewels; but you, despising such trifles, account yourself rich indeed if you can find a true friend. No man taketh so much delight in cards, dice, chess, hunting, or music, as you do in conversing with a well-informed and pleasant companion.' *

From More's great-grandson we learn, that he seldom feasted the great, but his poor neighbours often; *whom he would visit in their houses and bestow upon them his large liberality, not groats, but crowns of gold; and when he was a private lawyer, he would take no fees of poor folks, widows, nor pupils.* The ignorant and the proud, even in the highest stations, were those to whom he was observed to shew the least respect. On the other hand, he was a friend and patron to every man of letters, and he maintained epistolary correspondence with most of the learned in christendom of his day.

His chief foible is said to have been an affectation of singularity; and he is even accused of having worn his gown awry, that one shoulder might appear higher than the other. Cranmer also intimateth, that More was so desirous of esteem, that having once spoken his mind, he would never deviate therefrom, for fear of injuring the credit of his judgment. But these alleged weaknesses sound too much like the invidious censures which ever attend upon distinction; and if they be with truth attributable to More, they must after all be pronounced to be of too trivial a nature

* Farrag. Epist. p. 536.

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for our serious animadversion, when opposed to the nobler features of his sterling character.

To what study soever Sir Thomas applied himself, saith his great-grandson, *he grew in short time most famous therein.* He then complimenteth the knight's talent for poetry even in his youth, his skill in rhetoric, the purity of his Latin style, and his patience for such a wit in studying the law. Yet the same characteristic which distinguished More in other respects, and which induced him to appear to the world like his neighbours whatever his private habits and opinions might be, marked his talents also. Arrogance or overbearance were strangers to him; and he ever seemed more desirous of concealing, than of ostentatiously displaying, his talents. His own opinion of his writings was humble in the extreme. Praise, vain glory, lucre, or worldly advancement had certainly no influence on his pen, whatever Tindal and others asserted. *So that envenomed books might be once suppressed and abolished*, he wished his own *on a light and fair fire.* Of his Utopia he wrote, that he judged it no better worth, than to remain hidden in his own island, or to be consecrated to Vulcan; and of his epigrams, *you well know, dear Erasmus, they never pleased me, and if others had not liked them better than I do, they should never have been published.*

Powerful as he was in arguing upon any subject, it is related of him, that when he found a young opponent who was unable to maintain his ground against him, rather than

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to discourage rising merit, he would with ingenuity divert the conversation into a different channel. Yet was this man frequently appointed by the king, on account of his ready talents, to make answer to the compliments paid to his majesty when he visited his universities; and whenever More visited a university in his own country or abroad, he not only attended their public disputations, but entered into them himself. When Henry went over to meet the French king, and when Charles V. landed in England, More was appointed to make the gratulatory addresses.*

His celebrated political romance, UTOPIA, he wrote in Latin about the year 1516. It speedily gained him great applause over Europe, was translated into French, Italian, Dutch, and English, and hath now stood the test of nearly three centuries as a masterpiece of wit and fancy. It hath, however, experienced somewhat of a severe fate, in being better known and more admired abroad, than by the author's own countrymen; a circumstance which may in some measure sanction its re-appearance in an English dress of the day, though its merit is greater than to allow of its deriving any advantage by translation.

It can hardly be questioned, that under this ingenious fiction of a commonwealth, all his own notions of government were promulgated by More. He creates a kingdom in a new world, and obliquely censureth the defects which he had observed in the old one. More probably wrote this

* Roper and More.

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piece before he had heard of Luther; and the Wicklevites and Lollards were the only *heretics* then known in our country. He gave his mind full scope in it, and considered mankind and religion with the freedom of a true philosopher. It is easy to collect from it, what his thoughts then were of religion, the constitutions of the church, and of the clergy at that time. Had he died then, he would probably have been numbered with those, who though they lived in the communion of the church of Rome, yet saw her errors and corruptions, and only wanted fit opportunities of declaring themselves more openly for a reformation. Upon farther knowledge, and more experience of men and things, he appears to have materially changed many of his sentiments; and it is now not very easy, as we have already remarked, to account how so great an alteration was effected in him.*

More appears, by this piece, to have been an enemy to the severity of our laws, and to have thought in this particular in the same charitable and reasonable way with his mild and gentle friend Erasmus,† and with many others even of our own day.

The HISTORY OF KING RICHARD III was written about the year 1513, More being then one of the under sheriffs of London. He wrote it in Latin as well as in English, but it was never finished by him. In the volume of his English works it is printed from a copy said to have been

* See Burnet. † Tom. v. c. 167.

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in his own handwriting; and from that volume it is reprinted in the present work, as a record of our history which is little known, and which is certainly valuable if only on account of the writer.

More's great-grandson observes of this history, *it is so well penned, that if our chronicles of England were half so well set-out, they would entice all Englishmen to read them over often*, adding somewhat extravagantly, that no one ever adventured to finish the work, for the same reason that the Venus of Apelles remained unfinished.

Above a century after More's death, George Buck *took-up the cudgels* for Richard, which of course made him More's opponent in this work; and above a century later, came a noble speculator in our history, who seconded this advocate for a monster, and proved himself at least Buck's equal in the love of paradox. The former's censure of More's learning, and his other remarks, smell so strongly of party, and he hath found so little credit as a writer, that he cannot now be deemed worthy of a serious reply. The latter opponent, after allowing More's composition to be a beautiful one, and the writer of it to be one of the honestest statesmen and brightest names in our annals, supposes he wrote the tract, as he did his Utopia, to amuse his leisure and exercise his fancy. *He took-up a paltry canvas and embroidered it with a flowing design, as his imagination suggested the colours;* and in the end, the *honest statesman* is found guilty, not only of invention and romance, but of

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palpable, material, nay, wilful falsehood. At one moment, the great knight speaks truth; in the next, he propagates the most abominable lies. All writers, of whatever credit, are respected or condemned, as they confirm or oppose the *doubter's* hypothesis; and throughout the piece, the same author from whom he produces *exhibits* to prove one assertion, he challenges as foresworn to make way for another.

Yet these conceits, however ingenious, have had little or no effect in shaking the authority of More. The most popular historian of our day pays him every respect; our judgments have not been convinced by flippancies; and Richard still remains the monster he was.

By a passage in this tract, it appears that More once thought also of writing the history of Henry VII and of Perkin Warbeck; but it is probable that he either never found leisure for accomplishing such a design, or felt that the freedom of his pen might be in some measure fettered, by the favour which he experienced from Henry VIII.

Sir Thomas, although not to be numbered with Sanazzaro, Fracastoro, Vida, and others of his time, is allowed to have been no indifferent poet; and a more assiduous application to the muses would probably have made him a superior one. His EPIGRAMS are highly commended by Rhenanus, as will be seen by the epistle prefixed to them; and many authors beside Rhenanus have borne testimony to their merit. Our own correct and classical Jortin pro-

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nounces the poem on a lady of whom More had been deeply enamoured in his youth, to be the most pathetic and elegant in the collection; the reason is obvious, his hand was secretary to his heart. The short lines to Candidus, on the choice of a wife, have also been greatly admired. For the following translations of these poems, which cannot but be acceptable to the reader, I am indebted to the same distinguished hand which favoured me with the additional translation of More's epitaph; and I have added a version or two of the knight's epigrammatic stile for the amusement of the merely English reader.

To Candidus.

Enough by vagrant love,
Dear youth you've been misled:
O! rise these joys above,
And quit the lawless bed.

Some consort in your arms,
Heart link'd to heart, embrace;
Who with transmitted charms
Your lengthening line may grace.

So did for you your sire:
The debt, with interest due,
Posterity require,
My Candidus, from you.

Nor be it chief your aim,
Fortune or face to seek!
Slight love attends the dame,
Sought for her purse or cheek.

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No purer love can bear
The flame, which fortune fires;
It vanishes in air,
And ere it lives, expires.

Nay, fortune's courted charms
Fade in the miser's grasp,
When doom'd within his arms
An unloved spouse to clasp.

And beauty's vaunted power
By fever's tooth decays;
Or time-struck, like a flower
Beneath the solar blaze.

Then vows are urged in vain——
With beauty's passing hue,
Bound singly by that chain,
Affection passes too.

But genuine is the love
Which reason, virtue rears ——
All fever's force above,
Above the assault of years.

——First scrutinize her birth;
Be sure her mother's mild:
Oft with her milk her worth
The mother gives her child.

Next in herself be seen
Good temper's gentlest tone:
Still placid be her mien,
Unruffled by a frown;

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And still, her cheek's best charm,
Be her's sweet modesty ——
No lover-clasping arm,
No love-provoking eye.

Far from her lips' soft door
Be noise, be silence stern;
And her's be learning's store,
Or her's the power to learn.

With books she'll time beguile,
And make true bliss her own;
Unbuoyed by fortune's smile,
Unbroken by her frown.

So still, thy heart's delight
And partner of thy way,
She'll guide thy children right,
Where myriads go astray.

So, left all meaner things,
Thou'lt on her breast recline;
While to her lyre she sings
Strains, Philomel, like thine:

While still thy raptured gaze
Is on her accents hung,
As words of honied grace
Steal from her honied tongue——

Words they, of power to soothe
All idle joy or woe
With learning's varied truth,
With eloquence's flow.

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Such Orpheus' wife, whose fate
With tears old fables tell;
Or never would her mate
Have fetched her back from hell.

Such Naso's daughter, she
Whose muse with Naso's vied;
And such might Tullia be,
Her learned father's pride.

The Gracchi's mother such,
Who train'd the sons she bore;
Famed as their mother much,
And as their tut'ress more.

——But what to distant days
My lingering glance confines?——
One girl, of equal grace,
E'en in this rude age shines:

Single, worth all, she stands——
By fame through Britain flown,
Hail'd—gaze of other lands,
Cassandra of her own.

——Say, would a maid so rare
Within thy arms repose;
Were she, nor rich, nor fair,
Could'st thou decline her vows?

Enough of beauty her's,
With whom a husband's blest:
Enough of wealth she shares,
To whom enough's a feast.

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So lov'd, were she (I swear)
Than soot of darker die;
I'd think her far, more fair,
Than e'er met mortal eye:

So lov'd, were she (I swear)
Than poverty more poor;
I'd think her richer far,
Than kings with all their store.*

To Eliza, whom he loved in youth.

Thou livest, Eliza, to these eyes restored,
O more than life in life's gay bloom adored!
Many a long year, since first we met, has roll'd:
I then was boyish, and I now am old.
Scarce had I bid my sixteenth summer hail,
And two in thine were wanting to the tale;
When thy soft mien—ah mien for ever fled!—
On my tranc'd heart its guiltless influence shed.
When on my mind thy much-loved image steals,
And thy sweet long-lost former self reveals;
Time's envious gripe appears but half unkind:
Torn from thyself, to me thou'rt left behind.
The grace, that held my doting glance, though flown,
Has flown thy cheek—to make my breast its throne:
And as by gentle blasts the flame is fed,
And 'mid cold ashes rears its languid head;
So thou, though changed (ah! changed indeed) to view,
Kindlest the love, that once was thine, anew.
Now on my memory breaks that happy day,
When first I saw thee with thy mates at play:

* See vol. ii, p. 308.

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On thy white neck the flaxen ringlet lies,
With snow thy cheek, thy lip with roses vies.
Thine eyes, twin stars, with arrowy radiance shine,
And pierce and sink into my heart through mine.
Struck as with heaven's own bolt, I stand, I gaze;
I hang upon thy look in fix'd amaze:
And as I writhe beneath the new-felt spear,
My artless pangs our young companions jeer.
So charm'd me thy fair form; or woman grown,
Or from it's ripen'd grace as woman known.
Whether the glow, that thrills our early frame,
Lit in my breast the undecaying flame;
Or some kind planet at our natal hour,
Deign'd on our hearts it's common beam to pour:
For one, who knew with what chaste warmth you burn'd,
Had blabb'd the secret of my love return'd.
Then the duenna and the guarded door
Baffled the stars, and bade us meet no more.
Sever'd, our different fates we thence pursued,
Till this late day my raptures has renewed:
This day, whose rare felicity I prize,
Has given thee safe to my delighted eyes.
Crimeless, my heart you stole in life's soft prime;
And still possess that heart without a crime.
Pure was the love, which in my youth prevail'd;
And age would keep it pure, if honour fail'd.
O may the gods, who, five long lustres past,
Have brought us to each other well at last,
Grant that—when number'd five long lustres more——
Healthful I still may hail thee, healthful as before! *

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* See vol. ii, p. 350.

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Epigrams.

A squall arose; the vessel's toss'd;
The sailors fear their lives are lost.
Our sins, our sins, dismayed they cry,
Have wrought this fatal destiny.

A monk it chanc'd was of the crew
And round him, to confess, they drew.
Yet still the restless ship is toss'd
And still they fear their lives are lost.

One sailor, keener than the rest,
Cries, with our sins she's still oppress'd;
Heave out that monk, who bears them all,
And then full well she'll ride the squall.

So said so done; with one accord
They throw the caitiff overboard.
And now the bark before the gale
Scuds with light hull and easy sail.

Learn hence the weight of sin to know,
With which a ship could hardly go.*

While Brag was out, his wife, so frail,
To Hodge, the rustic yields.
Return'd the cuckold hears the tale,
And storms into the fields.

Poor Hodge he finds, and draws his sword——
A stone Hodge singles out——
Wretch, with my dearest wife you've whor'd——
I have, replies the lout.

* See vol. ii, p. 321.

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You own it do you then, Brag cries,
'Tis well you speak the truth;
By Jove, if you had told me lies,
I'd hewn you limb from tooth!*

When the sun shines, but ope those rows
Of teeth, with all your power,
And then with that enormous nose
You'll gnomon-out the hour.†

In the Leyden edition of the works of Erasmus, in the appendix to Dr. Jortin's Life of Erasmus, and in the editions of More's Latin works, are to be found several of the knight's Latin letters. It hath been justly remarked of them, that though they be valuable on several accounts, they have one small blemish,—they are more in the style of orations than of epistles, and the periods are too long and too embarrassed.

Of all More's writings, the controversial are indisputably the most reprehensible. But in those days, as we have already had occasion to remark, the object was, not only to endeavour to refute the arguments of the adversary, but likewise to equal him in abuse. If ever More appeareth to disadvantage, it is upon these occasions. The fact is, when religion was the subject in agitation, he was no longer himself. His bigotry overcame every principle of good sense, of decorum, of humanity. Like his adversary Luther,

* See vol. ii, p. 314. † Ibid. p. 339.

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his zeal and impetuosity were too hard-mouthed horses, which ran away with the chariot and the charioteer,——

——————Frustra retinacula tendens
Fertur equis auriga, neque audit currus habenas.

Thus it is remarked by bishop Atterbury, that, in his answer to Luther, More forgot himself so far, as to throw out the greatest heap of nasty language which ever was put together; that the book throughout is nothing but downright ribaldry, without a grain of reason to support it, and gave the author no other reputation, than that of having the best knack of any man in Europe at calling bad names in good Latin. More's English tracts against Tindal, Barns, &c. deserve a similar censure, though he certainly wrote with as much wit and eloquence as any writer of that age. In his Apology, printed in his English works, More endeavoureth to extenuate this conduct, by the bluntness of his nature, and the example given him by his adversaries; but, one of his understanding doth not stand vindicated by such arguments.

Burnet saith of More that he was no divine at all, nor conversant with the critical learning upon the scriptures; that his peculiar excellence in writing was, a natural, easy expression, and he presented all the opinions of popery with their fair side to the reader, disguising or concealing the darker side with great art. He was also no less dexterous in exposing all the ill consequences which would follow

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on the doctrine of the reformers, and had pleasant tales ready on all occasions, which he applied wittily to his purpose. He wrote rather for the rabble than for the learned, adds the bishop.

More's English works were published at London in a thick folio volume in the year 1557, by order of queen Mary; in whose reign it was given-out as an extraordinary circumstance, that king Edward died and she succeeded to the crown on the anniversary of the knight's suffering on the scaffold. More's nephew, William Rastell, then serjeant at law and afterward a judge, was patronised by her majesty as editor of the work; and had he written a Life of the knight (as hath been supposed), it would surely have been prefixed to the volume. As this book is now become very scarce it may not be improper to recapitulate the contents of it in this place.

Four short things written in his youth for his pastime.

The life of John Picus earl of Mirandula, translated out of Latin.

The history of king Richard III, unfinished.

A treatise (unfinished) upon these words of holy Scripture, *memorare novissima, et in eternum non peccabis.*

A dialogue concerning heresies and matters of religion.

The supplication of souls.

The confutation of Tindal.

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A letter impugning the erroneous writing of John Frith against the blessed sacrament of the altar.

The apology of Sir Thomas More, knight, made by him Anno 1533, after that he had given over the office of lord chancellor of England.

The Debellacion of Salem and Bizance.

A treatise upon the blessed sacrament of the altar.

A dialogue of comfort against tribulation.

A treatise to receive the blessed body of our Lord sacramentally and virtually both.

A treatise upon the passion of Christ, unfinished.

An exposition of a part of the passion of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Certain devout and virtuous instructions, meditations, and prayers, made and collected while he was prisoner in the Tower.

Letters, his epitaph, &c.

Of More's Latin works, three editions have passed the press. The first was printed at Basle in 8vo, in 1563; the second at Louvain in folio in 1566; the last and best was published by C. Gensch in folio at Frankfort on the Maine and Leipsic in 1689. So few copies of the last edition are to be found in this country, that a recapitulation of its contents may be acceptable to the reader also.

Vita et obitus T. Mori e Thomæ Stapletoni Tribus Thomis.

Doctorum virorum varia epigrammata in laudem et mortem T. Mori.

Historia Richardi Angliæ ejus nominis III.

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T. Mori responsio ad convitia M. Lutheri congesta in Henricum regem Angliæ ejus nominis VIII, sub Gulielmi Rossei nomine edita.

T. Mori expositio passionis Christi.

Quod pro fide mors fugienda non sit.

Precatio ex Psalmis.

T. Mori Utopia.

T. Mori Poemata, quibus præmissa sunt quædam ipsius et Gulielmi Lilii progymnasmata.

T. Mori dialogi Lucianei e Græcis in Latinum sermonem conversi, adjecta declamatione qua Luciani Tyrannicidæ respondetur.

T. Mori et Erasmi epistolæ.

Of More's personal pecularities we are told, that though his table was ever well supplied, he eat only of one dish himself, which was commonly salted meat. He used coarse brown bread, and was fond of milk, cheese, eggs, and fruit. Whatever dish he first tasted served him for his meal. In his youth he is said to have abstained wholly from wine; but he would taste it in his later years when diluted with water, or when he pledged his friends. To recreate the mind at the same time with the body, or perhaps to allow more leisure and digestion to his meals, he employed a person to read aloud while he sat at table, and he made occasional remarks on the subjects which occurred.*

His dress never occupied his thought. When his secre-

* More.

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tary, Harris, once told him that his shoes were torn, More desired him to tell his servant, who bought and ordered all his apparel at his own discretion, and whom he called his tutor, *to buy him new ones.* In matters of the utmost importance we are told he would consult his trusty Harris, and that More often submitted to his opinion, though his own judgment might have led him to vary from it.*

More's great-grandson adds, that though low in stature, the knight's person was well-proportioned,—*his complexion tending to phlegmatic, his colour white and pale, his hair neither black nor yellow but between both†; his eyes grey, his countenance amiable and cheerful, his voice neither big nor shrill, but speaking plainly and distinctly,—it was not very tuneable, though he delighted much in music; his body reasonably healthful, only that toward his latter end, by using much writing, he complained much of the ache of his breast.*

Holbein painted several family pieces for Sir Thomas, most of which appear to have been presented to the knight's friends abroad. One of the best of them is, however, at present in this country, an heirloom in the family of Sir Rowland Winn, which is allied to the Ropers. It is probably still preserved at the family residence, Nostal, in Yorkshire.

More's family, as we have seen, consisted of three daugh-

* More. † Probably chesnut.

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ters and a son; with whom he brought-up Margaret Gigs, afterward married to Dr. Clement.*

Margaret, his eldest daughter, married William Roper, Esq. of Well-hall, Eltham, Kent, and had issue, Thomas, married to Lucy, daughter of Sir Anthony Brown, master of the horse, and privy-counsellor to Henry VIII; Anthony, of whom we have no farther information; Elizabeth, married to ——— Stevenson, Esq. and afterward to Sir Edward Bray, Knight; Margaret, married to William Dawtry, Esq.; and Mary, married to Stephen Clarke, Esq. and afterward to James Basset, Esq.†

Elizabeth, the second daughter, married John, son and heir of Sir John Dancy, and had issue John, Thomas, Bartholomew, William, German, Alice, and Elizabeth.‡

Cecilia, the third daughter, married Giles Heron, Esq. of Shacklewell, Middlesex, and had issue John, Thomas, and Ann.§

John, the only son, married Ann, daughter and heiress of Edward Cresacre, Esq. of Baronborough, Yorkshire, and had issue Thomas, Austin, Edward, Bartholomew, another Thomas, and Ann.‖

It is said that the first wife of Sir Thomas, having had three daughters, prayed most earnestly for a son. This son

* More. † Roper by Lewis, ‡ More. § Ibid. ‖ Ibid.

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proved one of the *heroum filii* who are seldom equal to their fathers, and the knight would say, she had prayed so long for a boy, that she produced one at last who would be a boy as long as he lived. He was certainly less ornamental to More's family than his sister Margaret; but he had every advantage which a good education could afford him, and his natural parts appear to have been considerably advanced. Among the letters of Erasmus, is one addressed to him, in which the good scholar stileth him, a youth of great hope. The works of Aristotle also, printed in Greek by Forben's heirs in 1531, are dedicated to him by Erasmus; and those of Plato, and other works, by Grynæus.

Erasmus, who had frequently been an eye witness, stileth More's house, a little habitation of the muses and another academy of Plato. He injures it, however, he adds, by the comparison; for in Plato's academy they disputed of numbers and geometry, and only occasionally of moral virtues; but this house was appropriately a school of christian duty. Neither man nor woman was unemployed in it, in liberal occupation or useful study; though religion was the chief object. Discord was a stranger; not a peevish word was heard, no one was seen idle. Each had his occupation, all were cheerful, sober mirth prevailed; and the master of the house maintained this excellent economy, not by severity and chiding, but by gentleness and kindness.* When the same great scholar, in his colloquy *Ab-*

* Farrag. Epist. lib. 27.

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batis et Eruditæ nameth the *Moricæ* among certain learned ladies, he evidently alludes to More's daughters.

The knight's favourite, Margaret, appears to have enjoyed every advantage of an understanding strong by nature and cultivated with peculiar attention. Costerius, in his notes on Vincentius Lirinensis,* gives us an emendation by her of a passage in Cyprian, which is not unworthy of the ablest critic. She also wrote two declamations in English, which she and her father translated into Latin, both with so much eloquence, that it was difficult to pronounce which of them deserved the preference. She wrote a treatise of the Four Last Things, which More declared to be better than one which he had written himself. Erasmus complimenteth her in a letter, for her learning, still more than for her virtue or manners; and when cardinal Pole read one of her letters, he could not believe that it was written by a woman.†

One of the effusions of her affection, addressed to her father in prison, is here extracted from More's English works.

Mrs. Roper to Sir Thomas More.

Mine own good Father!

It is to me no little comfort, since I cannot talk with you by such means as I *would*, at the leastway to delig-

* P. 47. † More.

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myself in this bitter time of your absence by such means as I *may;* by as often writing to you as shall be expedient, and by reading again and again your most fruitful and delectable letter, the faithful messenger of your very virtuous and ghostly mind, rid from all corrupt love of worldly things, and fast knit only in the love of God and desire of heaven, as becometh a very true worshipper and a faithful servant of God. Who, I doubt not, good father, holdeth his holy hand over you, and shall (as he hath) preserve you both body and soul, *ut sit mens sana in corpore sano;* and namely now, when you have abjected all earthly consolations, and resigned yourself willingly, gladly, and fully, for his love, to his holy protection.

Father, what think you hath been our comfort since your departing from us? Surely the experience we have had of your life past, and godly conversation, and wholesome counsel, and virtuous example, and a surety, not only of the continuance of that same, but also a great increase, by the goodness of our Lord, to the great rest and gladness of your heart, devoid of all earthly dregs and garnished with the noble vesture of heavenly virtues,—a pleasant palace for the holy spirit of God to rest in. Who defend you (as I doubt not, good father, but of his goodness he will) from all trouble of mind and of body, and give me your most loving obedient daughter and handmaid, and all us your children and friends, to follow *that* that we praise in you, and to our only comfort remember and commune together of you; that we may in conclusion meet with you, mine

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own dear father, in the bliss of heaven, to which our most merciful Lord hath brought us with his precious blood!

Your own most loving, obedient daughter and bedeswoman,

MARGARET ROPER,

who desireth above all worldly things to be in John a Wood's stead, to do you some service. But we live in hope that we shall shortly receive you again,—I pray God heartily we may, if it be his holy will.

Mrs. Roper appears to have been no less attentive to the education of her children, than her parents had been to the cultivation of her own mind. The celebrated Roger Ascham informs us, that she was very desirous of having him for their instructor; but he could not be prevailed upon at that time to leave the university. Her daughter Mrs. Basset, was one of the ladies of queen Mary's privy-chamber. This lady translated into English a part of her grandfather's Exposition of our Saviour's passion; and she imitated his style so well, that it was thought to have been translated by the knight himself.

While we are upon this subject, it may not be uninteresting to the reader to peruse a translation of one of More's letters relative to the education of his children, as preserved by Stapleton.

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Sir Thomas More to Gonellus.

'I have received, my dear Gonellus, your letters, as usual, full of elegance and affection. Your love of my children I see by your letters, your diligence I gather from their own; for each of their letters pleased me. But especially was I delighted, that Elizabeth behaved herself with a decency of demeanour in my absence which few children observe in the presence of their parents. Give her to understand that that circumstance delighted me more, than could all the learning in the world. For I prefer the learning which is united with virtue, to all the treasures of kings; and if we separate from it propriety of conduct, what else doth the fame of letters bring us, than a kind of infamy in notoriety? This applieth peculiarly to the female sex. Their proficiency in literature being something new, and a certain reproach to the sluggishness of men, most men will be ready to attack them, and to expend their natural malice upon their learning. Nay, they will call their own ignorance a virtue, when compared with the faults of these learned. But, on the other hand, if a woman (which I wish may be the case with all my girls, and in which I have the greatest confidence under your auspices), to great excellence of character unite even a moderate portion of learning, I deem her possessed of more real good, than if she had the wealth of Crœsus and the beauty of Helen.

'And this not for the sake of fame, although she pur-

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sueth worth as doth the shadow the body. But because the reward of wisdom is more substantial than to be borne away on the wings of riches, or to fade with beauty; since it placeth its dependence on rectitude of conscience, not on the tongues of others, which abound in folly and evil. For as the avoiding of infamy is the duty of a good man, so the laying himself out for fame, is the part not only of a proud, but of a ridiculous and contemptible one; since that mind must of necessity be ill at ease, which ever fluctuateth between joy and sadness from the opinions of others. But of the great benefits which learning conferreth on man, I really deem none preferable to the instruction which letters afford us, that in the attainment of them we regard not the reputation they bring us, but their utility. Which precept, although some have abused their learning, like other good possessions, by hunting only for vain glory and popular fame, yet hath it been delivered by all the most learned, and especially by the philosophers, those moderators of human life.

'I have enlarged the more on this subject of vain glory, my Gonellus, because of the expression in your letter, that you think the elevated cast of my daughter Margaret's mind should not be lowered. I agree with you in this opinion. But in my mind, and I doubt not in yours also, he seems to lower the noble disposition of his mind, who accustometh himself to admire what is vain and base. And he, on the other hand, to elevate it, who esteemeth virtue and true good; who, by contemplating sublime objects, look-

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eth down as from on high, with disregard, on those shadows of good, which almost all, in ignorance, greedily catch at, for the substance.

'As this seemed to me the best way, I have not only requested you my dear Gonellus, whose strong love to all mine would have led you I know to have done so of your own accord, not only my wife, to whom her true maternal piety is a sufficient impulse as I have often witnessed, but I have frequently besought almost all of my friends also, that they might afterward admonish my children, that, avoiding the precipices of pride, they walk in the pleasant meads of modesty; that the sight of riches overcome them not; that they sigh not for the want of that in themselves which is erroneously admired by others; that they think no better of themselves for being well dressed, nor worse for being otherwise, that they spoil not the beauty which nature gave them by neglect, nor endeavour to increase it by vile arts; that they esteem virtue the first, letters the second good; and that of these they esteem those the best, which can best teach them piety to God, charity to man, modesty and christian humility in their own deportment.

'Thus shall they receive from the Almighty the reward of an innocent life; in the certain expectation of which, they shall not fear death, and feeling true joy in this life, be neither puffed-up with the vain praises of men, nor broken-down by their malice. These I esteem to be the true and genuine fruits of learning; which, though they be

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not put-forth by all the learned, yet, whoever studieth with this view, I maintain may produce them in the highest perfection.

'It mattereth not to the crop, whether man or woman sowed it; and if the name MAN, whose reason distinguisheth his nature from the brute, applieth to either sex, I say science, by which that reason is cultivated, and like a field beareth good corn under due tillage, equally becometh either. But if the soil in woman be bad by nature, and more productive in weeds than corn (by which opinion many deter that sex from letters), I, on the other hand, think the female genius ought on that account to be the more diligently cultivated by letters and good discipline; that the evil of nature may, by industry, be corrected. Those wise and holy men, the fathers, thought thus. Of whom, to omit the rest, Jerom and Augustin not only exhorted ladies of the highest rank and worth to the acquisition of letters, but, that they might the more easily accomplish it, they diligently expounded to them abstruse passages in scripture, and wrote long letters to young maidens with so much erudition, that old men of our day, and professors of divinity, can scarcely read, so far are they from understanding them. Which works of holy men, my learned Gonellus, you will of your goodness take care that my daughters read. From them they may best know the scope their learning ought to embrace, and they will teach them to esteem the consent of God, and a good conscience, the best fruit of their labours. So, placid and

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tranquil in themselves, they will neither be set-up with the praise of the flatterer, nor feel any bite from the unlearned scoffer.

'But I hear you long ago exclaiming, that these precepts, though true, are too hard for the tender age of my children; for who is there, however old or learned, whose mind is so strong and well-poised, that he hath not the smallest inclination for glory? But, my friend, the more difficult I see it to shake-off this pest of pride, the more endeavour do I deem necessary, even from infancy. Nor do I think there is any other cause why this unavoidable evil sticketh so fast in our breasts, than because almost as soon as we are born it is sown in our minds by our nurses, next cherished by our masters, and lastly, fed and brought to perfection by our parents. For no one teacheth us any good, without the expectation of *praise* as the reward of merit; whence, being long accustomed to the love of praise, it cometh to that at last, that while we study to please the majority, and therefore the inferiority, we grow ashamed of being good.

'That this plague may be driven the farther from my children, do you my Gonellus, their mother, and all my friends, chant, inculcate, nay, bellow in their ears, that vain glory is abject and disgustful; and that there is nothing more excellent than the humble modesty recommended by Christ. This your prudent kindness will inculcate by teaching them good rather than blaming their faults; and

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you will conciliate their love, not hatred, by your admonitions. And nothing can conduce more to this end, than the reading to them the precepts of the fathers. These, they know, are not angry with them; and, from their venerable sanctity, their authority must have great weight.

'Wherefore, if you will read some such things, beside their lesson in Sallust, to my Margaret and Elizabeth (for their understandings appear to be riper than those of John and Cecilia), you will increase my own as well as their obligations to you, which are already great. And my children, first dear to me by nature, then more endeared by their letters and virtue, shall become by their superior growth in learning and good manners under your auspices, superlatively dear indeed to me.

'Farewell. At Court, Whitsuneve.'

When More resigned his office of chancellor, he made a disposition of his landed property; reserving to himself his estates for the term of his life, and after his death assuring a part to his wife, a part to his son's wife as a jointure, and a part to Mr. Roper and his wife, with divers remainders over. Though this was settled long before the knight's attainder, the conveyance was then made void; and the inheritances allotted to his wife and to his son's wife were claimed by the crown. But it had so happened, that two days after More had settled his deed, he altered

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his first intention; and instead of reserving that portion to himself for his life, like the rest, he gave Mr. Roper and his wife their share in possession immediately. In consequence of this, as the statute went only to annul the first conveyance, the Ropers reserved their share without molestation. Lady More was driven from the house at Chelsea, her effects were taken from her, and Henry, of his mercy, allowed her twenty pounds a-year. John More and Mrs. Roper were for some time imprisoned, but in the end they obtained their liberty.*

Erasmus survived his friend More only about a year; and concluded, in July 1536, his long and laborious life, devoted to the opposition of barbarous ignorance and blind superstition, and to the promotion of useful literature and true piety. These glorious objects he endeavoured to accomplish in a mild and gentle manner, attacking not the persons of men, but the faults of the age; till necessity compelled him to reply to those who assaulted him with the utmost disingenuity and malice.

Early in life he perceived, and disclosed to the world, that the religion of the ecclesiastics of his day consisted in minute observances and formal grimaces, with which the wicked could comply as well as the good. He, on the other hand, made religion to consist in what the worthy alone observe; in the exercise of those christian virtues, which are formed in the mind from a knowledge of our duty and

* Roper and More.

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a conviction of its importance. In vain he afterward acted the pacifier; exhorting on one hand the court of Rome to proceed with more mildness, and the Lutherans, on the other, to behave with more submission and modesty. The pretensions of the former were so exorbitant, that nothing but capital punishments could support them; and the reformers were so shocked and provoked, so convinced that no compliance would be made with any of their requests, that they accounted it betraying the cause of truth to speak submissively to such incorrigible rulers.

Erasmus hath been justly censured for his weakness in flattering a party, whose sentiments and conduct he in many points disapproved; and in finding fault with those whom, on the whole, he resembled much more than he did their adversaries. But they who compelled him to this conduct, who hated the name of reformation, and treated as vile heretics all who dared even to wish for amendment, were far more blameable. If he wanted courage by nature, they who took advantage of his infirmity, far more wanted honesty and piety.

A certain pious craft and an innocent time-serving, which however we must so use as not to betray the cause of religion, &c. was the gospel which Erasmus preached to the Lutherans; for he imagined that they and their cause would go to ruin, and that a worse condition of things would ensue. Had they met his wishes, we might still have been involved in all the darkness which overspread the christian

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world in the fifteenth century, and for previous ages. So far would the popes and ecclesiastics have been from abandoning their beloved interests, founded on ignorance and superstition, that a bloody inquisition would have been established in Italy, Spain, and all christian countries, which would have extinguished for ever the lights then beginning to shine. Lutheranism, by gaining more stability than he expected, prevented the tyranny of an inquisition in Germany; and the reformation of Calvin secured the liberty of other countries. Had all Germany submitted to Leo and Charles, in compliance with his timorous counsels, Erasmus himself would undoubtedly have been one of the first sufferers. The court of Rome, no longer apprehensive he should join the heretics, would have offered him, a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, to the monks, who did a thousand times more service to that court, than a thousand such scholars as Erasmus. Had he lived sixteen years longer than he did, he would have seen an amazing change in the affairs of Charles, as well as in the religious state of Germany.

The apprehension of losing his revenues, the reputation he still enjoyed in the court of Rome, and was loath to relinquish, and possibly the fear of being excommunicated and proscribed, nay poisoned or assasssinated, might work together upon one of more courage than Erasmus, and restrain him from speaking freely of the controversies then agitated. He still, however, maintained the truth, though cautiously and obliquely. Though he frequently censured

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Luther, he heartily wished he might carry his point, and extort from his enemies some reformation of doctrine and manners; but, as he could not imagine that Luther would succeed, he adhered outwardly to the stronger party. The fear of want cannot have influenced him to say and do what he thought unlawful; but the fear of disobliging his best friends, as Henry VIII, Charles V, the popes, George of Saxony, Wolsey, Warham, More, Campegius, Bembus, Sadolet, and others, might influence his judgment though he was not aware of it. There is no necessity to suppose, that he acted against his conscience in adhering to the church of Rome; no, he persuaded himself that he did as much as piety and prudence required, in freely censuring her defects. The bold and resolute will greatly prefer the conduct of Luther; who, as the apologists of the good scholar must allow, acted far more like an apostle or primitive christian, than did Erasmus.

Concord is undoubtedly a valuable blessing; yet it is not to be purchased at the price of truth and liberty. These are infinitely more estimable than a sordid tranquillity beneath the yoke of falsehood and arbitrary dominion, under which the christian republic becomes a base faction, solicitous only of enjoying the present, and neglecting every thing laudable, under the pretext of preserving peace. And, had the pacific schemes of Erasmus been pursued, such would probably have been the present state of christianity. Though divisions in general do much harm, they have at least produced this good; the truth of the gospel, and a

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christian liberty which acquiesceth only in the decisions of Christ, are not entirely banished from the earth, as they would have been without the struggles of our ancestors. They produced no small benefit to the memory of Erasmus himself; who having his works condemned by theological cabals, and mangled by inquisitions, which struck out the most valuable part of his writings, would have been stigmatised through succeeding ages, if a party had not arisen in Europe, which willingly forgives him his weakness and irresolution, for the sake of his useful philological and theological labours; and gave him a second life, and recommended him to the christian world, by an elegant and faithful edition of his works.

Erasmus, it hath been said, was not rewarded in proportion to his merit. Yet, if we consider how many presents, invitations, and favours he received, how many he refused, and how little inclination he had for ecclesiastical preferments (more of which he might have obtained), we cannot class him with the *infelices literati*. In him we have a very remarkable instance of a man, who, with numerous disadvantages of birth and education, friendless and poor, overcame every obstacle, and, by dint of talent and industry, became one of the first scholars of his age, acquiring the patronage of princes, nobles, and prelates, of the greatest names in church as well as state.*

It is a pleasing circumstance in the history of two great

* See Jortin's Life of Erasmus.

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men like More and Erasmus, that the bond of friendship into which they entered in early life, appears never to have been broken; though, if we contrast the freedom of spirit displayed by the one, and the prejudices of the other, such an infraction may appear to have been sufficiently hazarded. As late in his life as he could, the knight still corresponded with his friend, and shewed him to the last the same esteem which he had ever entertained for him. In one of these letters he gently admonisheth the great scholar, not to recant or retract anything; but merely to condescend as far as he could to the infirmities of some honest and weak brethren. Thus the bigotted advice which More hath been said to have given his friend is a misrepresentation, though the use made by the reformers of the theological works of Erasmus might perhaps not unreasonably have contributed to diminish the knight's affection for him; since he could not be well pleased to find himself pressed by such arguments.*

We will add, by way of appendix to these Memoirs, three letters by Erasmus relative to More. The first, to Hutten, in drawing a portrait of the knight, will be found to describe minute particularities of his mind and body. That to Budæus contains a farther account of his manner of living and managing his family, and of the excellent dispositions and uncommon erudition of his daughters. The last, published under the name Nucerinus, gives us an elegant and pathetic account of the deaths of More and

* Jortin.

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Fisher, and though not acknowledged by him, hath been commonly, and with some probability, ascribed to Erasmus. As much of the spirit of these letters would be lost by translation, they are given in the original language; and we will add a few Testimonies, by the learned of his day, relative to More and his writings, which appear to demand a place on an occasion like the present.

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APPENDIX

TO THE

MEMOIRS.

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APPENDIX.

Erasmus Rot. Ulrico Hutteno S. D.

Quod Thomæ Mori ingenium sic deamas, ac pene dixerim deperis, nimirum scriptis illius inflammatus, quibus ut vere scribis nihil esse potest neque doctius neque festivius, istuc mihi crede clarissime Huttene tibi cum multis commune est, cum Moro mutuum etiam. Nam is vicissim adeo scriptorum tuorum genio delectatur, ut ipse tibi propemodum invideam. Hæc videlicet est illa Platonis omnium maxime amabilis sapientia, quæ longe flagrantiores amores excitat inter mortales, quam ullæ quamlibet admirabiles corporum formæ. Non cernitur illa quidem oculis corporeis, sed et animo sui sunt oculi, ut hic quoque verum comperiatur illud Græcorum ἐκ τῶν ἐρῶν γίνεται ἀνθρώπους ἐρᾶν. Per hos fit aliquoties, ut ardentissima charitate conglutinentur, inter quos nec colloquium nec mutuus conspectus intercessit. Et quemadmodum vulgo fit, ut incertis de causis alia forma alios rapiat; ita videtur et ingeniorum esse tacita quædam cognatio, quæ facit ut certis ingeniis impense delectemur, cæteris non item.

Cæterum, quod a me flagitas, ut tibi totum Morum velut in tabula depingam, utinam tam absolute præstare queam quam tu vehementer cupis. Nam mihi quoque non injucundum fuerit interim in amici multo omnium suavissimi

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contemplatione versari. Sed primum ὁ παῖδας ἀνδρὸς ἰδεῖν omnes Mori dotes perspexisse. Deinde haud scio an ille laturus sit, a quolibet artifice depingi sese. Nec enim arbitror levioris esse operæ Morum effingere, quam Alexandrum Magnum aut Achillem, nec illi quam hic noster immortalitate digniores erant. Tale argumentum prorsus Apellis cujuspiam manum desiderat; at vereor, ne ipse Fulvii Rutubæque similior sim quam Apellis. Experiar tamen tibi totius hominis simulacrum delineare verius quam exprimere, quantum ex diutina domesticaque consuetudine vel animadvertere licuit vel meminisse. Quod si quando fiet ut vos aliqua legatio committat, tum demum intelliges quam non probum artificem ad hoc negotii delegeris, vereorque plane ne me aut invidentiæ incuses aut cæcutientiæ, qui ex tam multis bonis tam pauca vel viderim. lippus vel commemorare voluerim invidus.

Atque ut ab ea parte exordiar qua tibi Morus est ignotissimus, statura modoque corporis est infra proceritatem, supra tamen notabilem humilitatem. Verum omnium membrorum tanta est symmetria, ut nihil hic omnino desideres; cute corporis candida, facies magis ad candorem vergit quam ad pallorem, quanquam a rubore procul abest nisi quod tenuis admodum rubor ubique sublucet, capilli subnigro flavore, sive mavis sufflavo nigrore, barba rarior, oculi subcæsii maculis quibusdam interspersi, quæ species ingenium arguere solet felicissimum, apud Britannos etiam amabilis habetur, cum nostri nigrore magis capiantur. Negant ullum oculorum genus minus infestari vitiis. Vultus ingenio respondet, gratam et amicam festivitatem semper præ se ferens, ac nonnihil ad ridentis habitum compositus; atque, ut ingenue dicam, appositior ad jucunditatem quam ad gravitatem aut dignitatem, etiamsi longissime abest ab ineptia scurrilitateque. Dexter humerus paulo videtur eminentior lævo, presertim cum incedit, id quod illi non accidit natura sed assuetudine, qualia permulta nobis solent adhærere. In reliquo corpore nihil est quod offendat, manus tantum subrusticæ sunt; ita duntaxat, si ad reliquam corporis speciem conferantur.

Ipse omnium quæ ad corporis cultum attinent semper a puero negligentissimus fuit, adeo ut nec illa magnopere curare sit solitus, quæ sola viris esse curanda docet Ovidius. [Formæ venustas quæ fuerit adolescenti, nec etiam

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licet ἐκ τῆς παλάμης conjicere; quanquam ipse novi hominem non majorem annis viginti tribus, nam nunc non multum excessit quadragesimum. Valetudo prospera magis quam robusta, sed tamen quæ quantislibet laboribus sufficiat honesto cive dignis, nullis aut certe paucissimis morbis obnoxia. Spes est vivacem fore, quando patrem habet admodum natu grandem sed mire virenti vegetaque senectute. Niminem adhuc vidi minus morosum in delectu ciborum. Ad juvenilem usque ætatem aquæ potu delectatus est, id illi patrium fuit. Verum hac in re ne cui molestus esset, fallebat convivas e stanneo poculo cervisiam bibens, eamque aquæ proximam, frequenter aquam meram. Vinum, quoniam illic mos est ad idem poculum vicissim invitare sese, summo ore nonnunquam libabat, ne prorsus abhorrere videretur, simul ut ipse communibus rebus assuesceret. Carnibus bubulis, salsamentis, pane secundario ac vehementer fermentato libentius vescebatur, quam his cibis quos vulgus habet in deliciis. Alioqui neutiquam abhorrens ab omnibus quæ voluptatem innoxiam adferunt etiam corpori. Lactariorum, et eorum fœtuum qui nascuntur in arboribus, semper fuit appetentior; esum ovorum in deliciis habet. Vox neque grandis est nec admodum exilis, sed quæ facile penetret aures, nihil habens canorum ac molle sed plane loquentis est; nam ad musicam vocalem a natura non videtur esse compositus, etiamsi delectatur omni musices genere. Lingua mire explanata articulataque, nihil habens nec præceps nec hæsitans. Cultu simplici delectatur, nec sericis purpurave aut catenis aureis utitur, nisi cum integrum non est ponere. Dictu mirum quam negligens sit ceremoniarum, quibus hominum vulgus æstimat morum civilitatem; has ut a nomine exigit, ita aliis non anxie præstat nec in congressibus nec in conviviis, licet harum non sit ignarus, si lubeat uti. Sed muliebre putat viroque indignum, ejusmodi ineptiis bonam temporis partem absumere.

Ab aula principumque familiaritate olim fuit alienior, quod illi semper peculiariter invisa fuerit tyrannis quemadmodum æqualitas gratissima. Vix autem reperies ullam aulam tam modestam quæ non multum habeat strepitus atque ambitionis, multum fuci, multum luxus, quæque prorsus absit ab omni specie tyrannidis. Quin nec in Henrici VIII. aulam pertrahi potuit nisi multo negotio, cum hoc principe nec optari quicquam possit civilius ac modestius. Natura libertatis atque otii est avidior, sed quemadmodum otio cum datur lubens utitur, ita quoties poscit res, nemo vigilantior aut patientior. Ad ami-

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citiam natus factusque videtur, cujus et sincerissimus est cultor, et longe tenacissimus est. Nec ille metuit πολυφιλίαν ab Hesiodo * parum laudatam. Nulli non patet ad necessitudinis fœdus. Nequaquam morosus in deligendo, commodissimus in alendo, constantissimus in retinendo. Si foris incidit in quempiam, cujus vitiis mederi non possit, hunc per occasionem dimittit, dissuens amicitiam, non abrumpens. Quos sinceros reperit, et ad ingenium suum appositos, horum consuetudine fabulisque sic delectatur, ut in his rebus præcipuam vitæ voluptatem ponere videatur. Nam a pila, alea, chartis, cæterisque lusibus, quibus vulgus procerum temporis tædium solet fallere, prorsus abhorret. Porro ut propriarum rerum est negligentior, ita nemo diligentior in curandis amicorum negotiis.

Quid multis? si quis absolutum veræ amicitiæ requirat exemplar, a nemine rectius petierit quam a Moro. In convictu tam rara comitas ac morum suavitas, ut nemo tam tristi sit ingenio quem non exhilaret, nulla res tam atrox cujus tædium non discutiat. Jam inde a puero sic jocis est delectatus, ut ad hos natus videri possit; sed in his nec ad scurrilitatem usque progressus est, nec mordacitatem unquam amavit. Adolescens comœdiolas et scripsit et egit. Si quod dictum esset salsius etiam in ipsum tortum, tamen amabat; usque adeo gaudet salibus argutis, et ingenium redolentibus; unde et epigrammatis lusit juvenis, et Luciano cum primis est delectatus, quin et mihi, ut Morias Encomium scriberem, hoc est, ut camelus saltarem, fuit auctor. Nihil autem in rebus humanis obvium est unde ille non venetur voluptatem, etiam in rebus maxime seriis. Si cum eruditis et cordatis res est, delectatur ingenio; si cum indoctis ac stultis, fruitur illorum stultitia. Nec offenditur morionibus, mira dexteritate ad omnium affectus sese accommodans. Cum mulieribus fere, atque etiam cum uxore, non nisi lusus jocosque tractat. Diceres alterum quendam esse Democritum, aut potius Pythagoricum illum philosophum, qui vacuus animo per mercatum obambulans, contemplatur tumultus vendentium atque ementium. Nemo minus ducitur vulgi judicio, sed rursus nemo minus abest a sensu communi. Præcipua illi voluptas est spectare formas, ingenia et affectus diversorum animantium; proinde nullum fere genus est avium quod domi non alat, si quod aliud animal vulgo rarum, veluti simia, vulpes, vi-

* Εργ. 715.

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verra, mustela, et his consimilia. Ad hæc si quid exoticum, aut alioqui spectandum occurrat, avidissime mercari solet, atque his rebus undique domum habet instructam, ut nusquam non sit obvium quod oculos ingredientium demoretur; ac toties sibi renovat voluptatem, quoties alios conspicit oblectari. Cum ætas ferret, non abhorruit a puellarum amoribus, sed citra infamiam, et sic ut oblatis magis fueretur quam captatis, et animo mutuo caperetur potius quam coitu.

Bonas literas a primis statim annis hauserat. Juvenis ad Græcas literas ac philosophiæ studium sese applicuit, adeo non opitulante patre, viro alioqui prudenti proboque, ut ea conantem omni subsidio destitueret; ac pene pro abdicato haberet, quod a patriis studiis desciscere videretur, nam is Britannicarum legum peritiam profitetur. Quæ professio, ut est a veris literis alienissima, ita apud Britannos cum primis habentur magni clarique, qui in hoc genere sibi parârunt auctoritatem, nec temere apud illos alia via ad rem ac gloriam parandam magis idonea. Siquidem pleramque nobilitatem illius insulæ peperit hoc studiorum genus. In eo negant quenquam absolvi posse, nisi plurimos annos insudarit. Ab hoc igitur cum non injuria abhorreret adolescentis ingenium, melioribus rebus natum, tamen post degustatas scholasticas disciplinas, sic in hoc versatus est, ut neque consulerent quenquam libentius litigatores, neque quæstum uberiorem faceret quisquam eorum qui nihil aliud agebant; tanta erat vis ac celeritas ingenii. Quin et evolvendis orthodoxorum voluminibus non segnem operam impendit. Augustini libros De Civitate Dei publice professus est adhuc pene adolescens auditorio frequenti, nec pudait nec pœnituit sacerdotes ac senes a juvene profano sacra discere. Interim et ad pietatis studium totum animum appulit, vigiliis, jejuniis, precationibus aliisque consimilibus progymnasmatis sacerdotium meditans. Qua quidem in re non paulo plus ille sapiebat, quam plerique isti qui temere ad tam arduam professionem ingerunt sese, nullo prius sui periculo facto.

Neque quicquam obstabat quo minus sese huic vitæ generi addiceret, nisi quod uxoris desiderium non posset excutere. Maluit igitur maritus esse castus, quam sacerdos impurus. Tamen virginem duxit admodum puellam, claro genere natam, rudem adhuc, utpote ruri inter parentes ac sorores semper habitam, quo magis illi liceret illam ad suos mores fingere. Hanc et literis instruendam

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curavit et omni Musices genere doctam reddidit, planeque talem penè finxerat quicum lubuisset universam ætatem exigere, ni mors præmatura puellam sustulisset e medio; sed enixam liberos aliquot, quorum adhuc supersunt puellæ tres, Margareta, Aloysia, Cecilia, puer unus Joannes. Neque diu cœlebs vivere sustinuit, licet alio vocantibus amicorum consiliis; paucis mensibus a funere uxoris viduam duxit magis curandæ familiæ quam voluptati, quippe nec bellam admodum nec puellam, ut ipse jocari solet, sed acrem ac vigilantem matrem familias, quicum tamen perinde comiter suaviterque vivit, ac si puella foret forma quantumlibet amabili. Vix ullus maritus a sua tantum obsequii impetrat imperio atque severitudine, quantum hic blanditiis jocisque. Quid enim non impetret, posteaquam effecit, ut mulier jam ad senium vergens, ad hoc animi minime mollis, postremo ad rem attentissima, cithara, testudine, monochordo, tibiisque canere disceret, et in hisce rebus quotidie præscriptum operæ pensum exigenti marito redderet? Consimili comitate totam familiam moderatur, in qua nulla tragœdia, nulla rixa. Si quid exstiterit, protinus aut medetur, aut componit. Neque quenquam unquam dimisit ut inimicum, aut ut inimicus. Quin hujus domus fatalis quædam videtur felicitas, in qua nemo vixit qui non provectus sit ad meliorem fortunam, nullus unquam ullam famæ labem contraxit. Quin vix ullos reperias, quibus sic convenerit cum matre, ut huic cum noverca, nam pater jam alteram induxerat; utramque non minus adamavit ac matrem. Nuper induxit tertiam, hac Morus sancte dejerat se nihil unquam vidisse melius. Porro erga parentes ac liberos sororesque sic affectus est, ut nec amet moleste, nec usquam desit officio pietatis. Animus est a sordido lucro alienissimus. Liberis suis semovit e facultatibus quod illis satis esse putat, quod superest largiter effundit.

Cum advocationibus adhuc aleretur, nulli non dedit amicum verumque consilium, magis illorum commodis prospiciens quam suis; plerisque solitus persuadere uti litem componerent, minus enim hic fore dispendii. Id si minus impetrabat, tum rationem indicabat qua possent quam minimo dispendio litigare, quando quibusdam hic animus est ut litibus etiam delectentur. In urbe Londoniensi, in qua natus est, annos aliquot judicem egit in causis civilibus; id munus, ut minimum habet oneris (nam non sedetur nisi die Jovis usque ad prandium) ita cum primis honorificum habetur. Nemo plures causas absolvit, nemo se gessit integrius, remissa plerisque pecunia, quam ex præscripto debent

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qui litigant. Siquidem ante litis contestationem actor deponit tres drachmas, totidem reus, nec amplius quicquam fas est exigere. His moribus effecit, ut civitati suæ longe charissimus esset. Decreverat autem hac fortuna esse contentus, quæ et satis haberet auctoritatis, nec tamen esset gravibus obnoxia periculis.

Semel atque iterum extrusus est in legationem, in qua cum se cordatissime gessisset, non conquievit serenissimus rex Henricus, ejus nominis octavus, donec hominem in aulam suam pertraheret. Cur enim non dicam pertraheret? Nullus unquam vehementius ambiit in aulam admitti, quam hic studuit effugere. Verum cum esset optimo regi in animo familiam suam eruditis, gravibus, cordatis et integris viris differtam reddere, cum alios permultos, tum Morum in primis accivit; quem sic in intimis habet, ut a se nunquam patiatur discedere. Sive seriis utendum est, nihil illo consultius; sive visum est regi fabulis amænioribus laxare animum, nullus comes festivior. Sæpe res arduæ judicem gravem et cordatum postulant, has sic Morus discutit ut utraque pars habeat gratiam. Nec tamen ab eo quisquam impetravit, ut munus a quoquam acciperet. Felices res publicas, si Mori similes magistratus ubique præficeret princeps! Nec interim ullum accessit supercilium. Inter tantas negotiorum moles, et veterum amiculorum meminit, et ad literas adamatas subinde redit. Quicquid dignate valet, quicquid apud amplissimum regem gratia pollet, id omne juvandæ reipublicæ, juvandis amicis impendit. Semper quidem adfuit animus de cunctis benemerendi cupidissimus, mireque pronus ad misericordiam; eum nunc magis exerit, quando potest plus prodesse. Alios pecunia sublevat, alios auctoritate tuetur, alios commendatione provehit; quos alioqui juvare non potest, his consilio succurit; nullum unquam a se tristem dimisit. Diceres Morum esse publicum omnium inopum patronum. Ingens lucrum sibi putat accessisse, si quem oppressum sublevavit, si perplexum et impeditum explicuit, si alienatum redegit in gratiam. Nemo lubentius collocat beneficium, nemo minus exprobrat. Jam cum tot nominibus sit felicissimus, et felicitatis comes fere soleat esse jactantia, nullum adhuc mortalium mihi videre contigit qui longius abesset ab hoc vitio.

Sed ad studiorum commemorationem redeo, quæ me Moro, mihique Morum potissimum conciliarunt. Primam ætatem carmine potissimum exercuit, mox

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diu luctatus est ut prosam orationem redderet molliorem, per omne scripti genus stylum exercens, qui cujusmodi sit quid attinet commemorare? tibi præsertim qui libros ejus semper habeas in manibus. Declamationibus præcipue delectatus est, et in his, materiis adoxis, quod in his acrior sit ingeniorum exercitatio. Unde adolescens etiamnum dialogum moliebatur, quo Platonis communitatem ad uxores usque defendit. Luciani Tyrannicidæ respondit, quo in argumento me voluit antagonistam habere; quo certius periculum faceret, ecquid profecisset in hoc genere. Utopiam hoc consilio edidit, ut indicaret quibus rebus fiat, ut minus commode habeant respublicæ; sed Britannicam potissimum effinxit, quam habet penitus perspectam cognitamque. Secundum librum prius scripserat per otium, mox per occasionem primum adjecit extempore; atque hinc nonnulla dictionis inæqualitas.

Vix alium reperias qui felicius dicat extempore, adeo felici ingenio felix lingua subservit. Ingenium præsens et ubique prævolans, memoria parata, quæ cum omnia habeat velut in numerato, promte et incontanter suggerit quicquid tempus aut res postulat. In disputationibus nihil fingi potest acutius, adeo ut summis etiam theologis sæpe negotium facessat, in ipsorum arena versans. Joannes Coletus, vir acris exactique judicii, in familiaribus coloquiis subinde dicere solet *Britanniæ non nisi unicum esse ingenium*, cum hæc insula tot egregiis ingeniis floreat. Veræ pietatis non indiligens cultor est, etiamsi ab omni superstitione alienissimus. Habet suas horas quibus Deo litet precibus, non ex more sed e pectore depromtis. Cum amicis sic fabulatur de vita futuri seculi, ut agnoscas illum ex animo loqui, neque sine optima spe. Ac talis Morus est etiam in aula. Et postea sunt qui putent christianos non inveniri nisi in monasteriis. Tales viros cordatissimus rex in familiam suam atque adeo in cubiculum non solum admittit, verum etiam invitat, nec invitat modo verum etiam pertrahit. Hos habet arbitros ac testes perpetuos vitæ suæ, hos habet in consiliis, hos habet itinerum comites. Ab his stipari gaudet, potius quam luxu perditis juvenibus aut mulierculis, aut etiam torquatis Midis, aut insinceris officiis; quorum alius ad voluptates ineptas avocet, alius ad tyrannidem inflammet, alius ad expilandum populum novas technas suggerat.

In hac aula si vixisses Huttene, sat scio rursum aliam aulam describeres, et *misaulos* esse desineres, quanquam tu quoque cum eo principe vivis ut inte-

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griorem nec optare possis. Neque desunt qui rebus optimis faveant, veluti Stromerus ac Coppus. Sed quid ista paucitas ad tantum examen insignium virorum, Montjoii, Linacri, Pacæi, Coleti, Stocschleii, Latimeri, Mori, Tonstalli, Clerici, atque aliorum his adsimilium ? quorum quemcumque nominaris, mundum omnium virtutum ac disciplinarum semel dixeris. Mihi vero spes est haudquaquam vulgaris, fore ut Albertus, unicum his temporibus nostræ Germaniæ ornamentum, et plures sui similes in suam allegat familiam, et cæteris principibus gravi sit exemplo, ut idem et ipsi suæ quisque domi facere studeant. Habes imaginem ad optimum exemplar a pessimo artifice non optime delineatam. Ea tibi minus placebit, si continget Morum nosse propius. Sed illud tamen interim cavi, ne mihi possis impingere quod tibi minus paruerim, neve semper opprobres nimium breves epistolas. Etiamsi hæc nec mihi scribenti visa est longior nec tibi legenti, sat scio prolixa videbitur; id faciet Mori nostri suavitas. Verum, ne nihil ad postremam tuam epistolam respondeam, &c. Antwerpiæ, X. Cal. Aug. Anno 1519. (Epist. 447).

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Erasmus Rot. Gulielmo Budæo, S. D.

——————— Est quod Moro gratuleris. Nam rex hunc, nec ambientem nec flagitantem, munere magnifico honestavit, addito salario nequaquam pœnitendo; est enim principi suo a thesauris. Ea functio apud Britannos, ut est splendida cum primis atque honorifica, ita non admodum est obnoxia nec invidiæ nec molestis negotiis. Erat competitor, homo sat gratiosus, qui sic ambiebat hoc muneris, ut non gravaretur suo victu ciboque gerere. At rex optimus hic certissimum in Morum favoris argumentum dedit, qui non ambienti salarium etiam addere maluerit, quam gratuitum magistratum admittere. Nec hoc contentus princeps benignissimus, equitis aurati dignitatem adjecit. Neque dubitandum est quin illum sit amplioribus ornamentis aliquando cumulaturus, quum sese offeret occasio. Siquidem cælibes evehere longe proclivius est principibus. At Morus sic est admixtus ordini conjugum, ut nec uxoris obitu sit emancipandus. Priorem enim, quam virginem duxerat, extulit; et hanc viduus viduam duxit. Sed hunc principis animum hoc magis gratulor Moro, quod quicquid huic accesserit vel autoritatis vel gratiæ, id existimem bonis studiis accedere; quibus ille sic favet, ut si pares essent animo facultates, non deesset apud Britannos felicibus ingeniis candidus ac benignus Mæcenas. Solent aulæ principum idem facere quod medici, qui corpus sibi traditum primum inaniunt, mox implent ac vegetant. Nec dubito quin Moro nostro simile quippiam acciderit hactenus. Quid tibi venerit usu, tute melius nosti. Et tamen illius benignitatem senserunt ingenia, quum adeo non abundaret illi quod largiretur, ut ære gravaretur alieno.

Nec hac parte solum ornat studia, quod ipse doctissimus candide favet doctis omnibus, verum etiam quod universam familiam honestissimis literarum studiis excolendam curat; novo quidem hactenus exemplo, sed quod brevi plures ni fallor sint imitaturi, adeo feliciter succedit. Habet filias tres, quarum maxima natu Margareta jam nupta est juveni, primum beato, deinde moribus integerrimis ac modestissimis, postremo non alieno a nostris studiis. Omnes a teneris annis curavit imbuendas, primum castis ac sanctis moribus, deinde politioribus literis. Filiabus tribus quartam adjunxit puellam, quam benig-

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nitatis gratia alit, ut illis sit sodalis. Habet privignam mira forma raroque ingenio puellam, annos jam aliquot nuptam juveni non indocto, sed cujus moribus nihil sit magis aureum. Habet filium ex uxore priore, natum annos plus minus tredecim, ex liberis natu minimum. Ante annum visum est Moro mihi specimen aliquod exhibere, quantum in literis profecissent. Jussit ut omnes ad me scriberent, et quidem suo quisque Marte. Nec argumentum est suppeditatum, nec in sermone quicquam est correctum; etenim cum illi schedas obtulissent patri castigandas, ille velut offensus incommoda scriptura, jussit ut eadem accuratius ac purius describerent. Id ubi factum est, ne syllaba quidem mutata, literas obsignatas ad me misit. Crede mihi, Budæe, nihil æque sum admiratus. In sensibus nihil erat ineptum aut puellare; sermo talis, ut sentires esse quotidie proficientium.

Hunc chorum amabilem una cum sponsis duobus domi habet. Nullam illic videbis otiosam, nullam ineptiis muliebribus occupatam. Illis T. Livius est in manibus. Nam eo progressæ sunt, ut auctores hujusmodi legant et intelligant citra interpretem, nisi si quod incidat verbum, quod me quoque fortassis aut mei similem fuerat remoraturum. Uxor, ingenio magis ac rerum usu quam eruditione valens, mira dexteritate moderatur omne collegium, ἐγκυκλίως cujuspiam vicibus fungens, pensum cuique præscribens atque exigens, neque sinens cessare quenquam nec frivolis occupari. Soles in literis tuis subinde queri, quod tua causa male audiret philologia, quæ tibi duo mala conciliasset, valetudinis ac rei familiaris dispendium. At Morus hoc agit, ut omnibus nominibus, et apud omnes bene audiat; hoc literis debere se prædicans, quod prosperiore sit valetudine, quod optimo principi, quod suis et exteris charus et gratiosus, quod re lautiore, quod sibi quod amicis jucundior, quod patriæ quod cognatis et affinibus utilior, quod ad aulæ commercium quod ad procerum convictum quod ad omnem vitæ consuetudinem accommodatior, denique quod superis gratior. Primum male audiebant studia, quod sensum communem adimerent addicto cultori. Nulla est profectio, nulla negotia tam multa tam ardua, quæ libellos Moro de manibus excutiant; et tamen vix alium reperies qui magis sit omnibus omnium horarum homo, qui ad obsequium facilior, ad congressus magis obvius, in colloquio magis alacer, quique tantum veræ prudentiæ cum tanta morum suavitate conjunxerit. Quibus rebus factum est, ut quum ante paucos dies literarum amor ad omne vitæ vel præsidium vel

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ornamentum haberetur inutilis, nunc nemo pene sit magnatum, qui liberos ut majorum imaginibus dignos agnoscat, nisi bonis literis eruditos. Quin et monarchis ipsis bona regalium decorum pars abesse videtur, in quibus literarum peritia desideretur.

Jam neminem fere mortalium non habebat hæc persuasio, sexui fœminino literas et ad castitatem et ad famam esse inutiles. Nec ipse quondam prorsus ab hac abhorrui sententia; verum hanc mihi Morus penitus excussit animo. Etenim quum duabus rebus potissimum periclitetur puellarum castitas, otio ac lascivis lusibus, ab horum utroque literarum arcet amor. Nec alia res melius tuetur famam integram, quam mores incontaminati. Nec ullæ firmius castæ sunt, quam quæ judicio castæ sunt. Neque vero improbo consilium eorum, qui manuariis operis prospiciunt pudicitiæ filiarum. Verum nulla res sic totum puellæ pectus occupat, ut studium. Atque hinc præter hoc fructus, quod animus ab otio pernicioso prohibetur, hauriuntur optima præcepta, quæ mentem ad virtutem et instituant et inflamment. Multis simplicitas et rerum inscitia pudicitiæ jacturam attulit, priusquam scirent quibus rebus tantus thesaurus periclitaretur. Neque video cur maritis sit metuendum, ne minus habeant morigeras si doctas habeant, nisi si qui tales sint, ut ea velint exigere ab uxoribus quæ non sunt exigenda a probis matronis. Imo mea sententia nihil est intractabilius inscitia. Certe hoc præstat animus cultura studiorum exercitatus, ut intelligat æquas probasque rationes, videatque quid deceat quid expediat. Atque propemodum persuasit, qui rem docuit. Ad hæc quum jucunditas firmitasque conjugii magis ab animorum benevolentia, quam corporum amore proficiscatur, multo tenacioribus vinculis junguntur quos ingeniorum quoque charitas copulat; magisque veretur maritum uxor, quem agnoscit et preceptorem. Nec ideo minus habebit pietatis, quia minus habet superstitionis. Equidem malo talentum auri puri, quam tria talenta multo plumbo scoriaque vitiata. Audimus passim alias mulierculas sic a concione redeuntes, ut prædicent mirifice fuisse concionatum qui dixit, ac vultum hominis graphice depingunt; ceterum neque quid dixerit, neque quale sit quod dixit recensere possunt. Hæ tibi totam pene concionem ordine referunt non sine delectu; si quid stulte, si quid impie, si quid extra rem effutiit ecclesiastes (quemadmodum hodie non raro fieri videmus) id norunt vel ridere vel negligere vel detestari. Atque hoc demum est audire sacras conciones; cum hujusmodi

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demum vere jucundum est convivere. Plurimum enim ab istis dissentio, qui conjuges non in alium usum habent quam ad obsequium voluptatis, quam ad rem magis appositæ sunt semifatuæ. Pectus habeat oportet, quæ familiam contineat in officio, quæ liberorum mores fingat ac formet, quæ marito per omnia satisfaciat.

Cæterum cum proximo colloquio illud objecissem Moro, quod si quid humanitus accideret, fore ut gravius discruciaretur earum desiderio in quibus instituendis tantum insumsisset operæ, respondit incontanter, si quid acciderit quod vitiari non potest, malim eas mori doctas quam indoctas. Moxque mihi venit in mentem Phocionis, ni fallor, apophthegma, cui bibituro cicutam cum uxor acclamaret *mi vir innocens morieris; quid,* inquit, *ais uxor, an me malles nocentem mori?* Interim illa cogitatio subiit animum meum, ut vos duos ceu duces quosdam eximios in hoc laudis genere componam, veluti si quis Camillum committat cum Scipione Africano. Tu et pluribus annis et iniquiore seculo cum literarum hostibus es conflictatus, hoc certe calculo Moro superior. Cæterum quod tu in filiis tantum ac fratribus ausus es moliri, hoc ille non dubitat et in uxoribus et in filiabus facere, fortiter contempta novi exempli invidia; quo nomine vicissim ille te præcellit. Tu rursum libris editis utriusque literaturæ proventum magis auxisti quam ille, copiosius etiam, uti nobis pollicemur, in posterum aucturus, si modo cœperis opes tuas a scriniis depromtas in populum elargiri. Quanquam et a Moro magnum aliquid exspectat juventus, quod ille multum adhuc absit a senectute, et patrem habet non minorem annis octoginta mire virenti senectute, ut vix alium reperias qui bellius gestet ætatem; unde licet et Moro longævitatem ominari. &c.

Ex rure Anderlacensi, Anno 1521 (Epist. 605.)

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Gulielmus Covrinus Nucerinus Philippo Montano, S. D.

QUONIAM juxta Pythagoræ sententiam oportet omnia esse communia, recte collegit Euripides, et dolores inter amicos oportere communes esse. Accipies igitur, vir amicissime, ab amico minime læta, sed omni lacrymarum genere bonis omnibus deploranda: quanquam arbitror famam istuc jamdudum omnia pertulisse priusquam ad nos, de morte quorundam apud Anglos insignium virorum, sed præcipue Thomæ Mori, dum viveret ejus regni baronis inclyti, ac supremi judicis, quem illi cancellarium appellant. Qua dignitate non est apud eam gentem alia major, excepto rege; eoque quum prodit, aureum sceptrum imposita corona cæsarea gestatur ad unum latus, ad alterum liber. Quæ vero sum narraturus, partim e schedis Gallice scriptis, quæ hic circumferuntur, desumpsi, partim e rumoribus; nam nihil horum vidi. Sed priusquam aggrediar, paucis describam Londoniensis urbis situm.

Civitas in latum angusta, ad Thamysim flumen sic in longum porrecta est, ut videatur non posse desinere, unde et nomen videtur inditum; siquidem apud Flandros loca mari vicina *Dunen* appellant. Indidem dictum videtur Galliarum Lugdunum, quasi dicas *longas ripas*. Ad orientem in extremo habet arcem bene munitam, qua reges interdum utuntur, vulgus Turrim appellat. Sed in eadem servari solent viri nobiles, aut alias dignitate quapiam præminentes, qui videntur aliquid adversus regiam majestatem deliquisse. In altero extremo ad occasum insigne monasterium est Benedictinorum, vulgus appellat Westmonasterium: et huic proximum regis palatium structuræ veteris, sed quo nunc reges parum delectantur. Palatio adjuncta est domus spaciosissima, nullis fulta columnis, in qua sedent judices. Utrumque ædificium flumini imminet, ut hinc illinc cymba vehi possint.

In hac arce Thomas Morus posteaquam multis mensibus fuisset captivus, calend. Jul. ann. Dom. M.D.XXXV productus est ad modo dictam curiam, capitis causam dicturus apud tribunal judicum a rege delegatorum. Ibat reus baculo innixus tam longam viam, corpore gravi ægrotatione in carcere debili-

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tato, nihil tamen perturbationis vultu præ se ferens. Primum recitati sunt articuli criminum quæ illi objiciebantur. Mox cancellarius qui Moro successit, ac dux Nortfolcii, hunc in modum reum appellarunt.

'En vides Magister More (sic appellant mediocri dignitate præditos) te graviter deliquisse in regiam majestatem. Attamen speramus te, si modo resipiscas, et abjures istam obstinatam opinionem, in qua hactenus tam procaciter perstitisti, veniam a regis clementia consequuturum.'

Ad hæc Morus——'Domini mei, ego summo cordis affectu ago vobis gratias pro ista vestra amica erga me voluntate: tantum illud oro Deum omnipotentem, confirmare dignetur me in hac qua nunc sum sententia, ut in ea perseverem usque ad mortem. Cæterum quum reputo quam prolixi quamque graves articuli sunt quibus oneror, vereor ne mihi nec ingenium suppetat, nec memoria, nec oratio quæ sufficiat ad respondendum omnibus; præsertim quum in carcere tam diu fuerim detentus, in quo gravi ægrotatione contraxi corporis debilitatem, quæ me nunc etiam habet.'

Tum jussu judicum allata est sella, in qua sederet. Ubi consedisset, prosequutus est institutum sermonem hunc in modum.

'Quod ad primum attinet articulum, qui conatur ostendere meam in regem malevolentiam in negotio posterioris matrimonii, confiteor ingenue, me semper restitisse illius serenissimæ majestati. Nec est animus super hoc negotio quicquam aliud dicere, quàm quod hactenus semper dixi, ad hoc urgente me conscientia: per quam ut non debebam, ita nec volebam principem meum celare veritatem. Nec hic est ulla proditio quæ intenditur; quin potius, ni id fecissem, præsertim in re tanti momenti, unde pendebat mea sententia, et principis honos, et regni tranquillitas, tum verè fuissem, quod nunc objicitur, malevolus, perfidus ac proditor. Ob hoc delictum (si modo delictum appellandum est) gravissimas dedi pœnas, exutus omnibus facultatibus meis, ac perpetuo addictus carceri, in quo menses jam quindecem totos fui detentus. Sed his omissis tantum ad ea respondebo quæ sunt hujus negotii præcipua. Quod objicitur, me incurrisse in pœnam violatæ constitutionis, quæ proximo con-

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silio prodita est, me jam in carcere agente ; quasi malitioso animo, perfidiose, ac proditorie regiæ majestati detraxerim famam, honorem ac dignitatem quæ illi per dictam constitutionem erat tributa, videlicet quod ibi declaratur sub Jesu Christo supremum caput ecclesiæ Anglicanæ : inprimis respondebo ad hoc quod mihi objicitur, quod Domino Secretario Regis ac venerabili majestatis illius consil.. rogatus quæ mea esset de hoc edicto sententia, nihil aliud voluerim respondere, quàm me jam mundo mortuum esse, nec istiusmodi negotiis amplius solicitari, sed tantum meditari in passione domini nostri Jesu Christi. Dico me per istam vestram constitutionem ob hoc silentium non posse damnari capitis, eo quod nec vestrum edictum, nec ullæ leges mundi possunt quenquam ob silentium addicere morti, sed tantum ob dictum aut perpetratum facinus. De occultis enim solus judicat Deus.'

Ad hæc respondit procurator regius interpellans : at tale silentium, inquit, evidens argumentum est animi malè sentientis de jam dicta constitutione. Nam omnis subditus sincerus ac fidelis regiæ majestati, si de dicta constitutione interrogetur, tenetur et obligatur citra omnem dissimulationem respondere categoricè egium edictum esse bonum, justum ac sanctum.

Ad quæ Morus : ' Si verum est quod habetur in legibus, eum qui tacet videri consentire, meum silentium confirmavit potius vestram constitutionem quàm improbavit. Jam quod dicis, omnem subditum fidelem obligari ut respondeat categoricè si interrogetur, &c. respondeo, bonæ fidei subditum magis obligatum esse Deo, conscientiæ, et animæ suæ, quàm ulli alii rei in hoc mundo, maxime si talis conscientia, qualis est mea, nihil offendiculi, nihil seditionis pariat domino suo. Nam illud pro certo vobis affirmo, quòd nulli mortalium unquam detexerim hac in re conscientiam meam.

' Venio nunc ad secundum accusationis caput, quo arguor contra dictam constitutionem molitus ac machinatus fuisse, eo quod ad Roffensem scripserim octo paria epistolarum, quibus illum animarim adversus istud edictum. Equidem vehementer optarim epistolas hic proferri ac recitarri, quæ me vel convincerent vel liberarent. Cæterum quando illæ, quemadmodum prædicatis, per episcopum exustæ sunt, ipse non gravabor recitare sententiam earum. In earum quibusdam agebatur de nostris privatis negotiis, pro vetere nostra ami-

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citia ac familiaritate. In una quadam continebatur responsum ad episcopi literas quibus scire cupiebat, quid et quo pacto respondissem de ista constitutione. Ad id nihil aliud rescripsi, nisi me jam meam composuisse conscientiam, ipse componeret suam. Animæ meæ periculo, ac teste Deo vobis assevero, nihil aliud in illis literis a me scriptum fuisse! Harum igitur caussa non possum per vestram constitutionem addici morti.

'Superest tertius articulus, qui intendit, quod quum de vestra constitutione examinarer, dixerim eam esse similem gladio utrinque secanti, propterea quòd si quis vellet eam servare, perderet animam; si contradicere, perderet corpus. Idem quoniam, ut dicitis, respondit episcopus Roffensis, perspicuum esse inter nos fuisse conspirationem. Ad hæc respondeo, me nunquam fuisse loquutum, nisi conditionaliter: sic videlicet, si tale esset edictum, qualis est gladius utrinque incidens, quo pacto posset quis evitare, quin in alterum incideret periculum. Hæc mea fuit oratio. Quomodo responderit episcopus, nescio: si illius oratio cum mea congruebat, id nequaquam accidit ex conspiratione, sed potius ex ingeniorum ac doctrinæ similitudine. Breviter: illud pro certo habetote, me nunquam quicquam malitiose fuisse loquutum adversus vestram constitutionem: at fieri potuit, ut ad benignam regis clementiam aliquid malitiose fuerit delatum.'

Post hæc vocati sunt per quendam ex ostiariis duodecim viri, juxta gentis illius consuetudinem, quibus traditi sunt articuli, ut super illis consultarent, ac post consultationem judicarent, ac pronunciarent, utrum Thomas Morus malitiose obstitisset prædictæ constitutioni regis, an non. Qui quum per horæ quartam partem secessissent, reversi sunt ad principes ac judices delegatos, ac pronunciarunt GUILTY, hoc est, dignus est morte. Ac mox per Dn. Cancellarium lata est sententia juxta tenorem novæ constitutionis.

His ita peractis Thomas Morus hunc in modum orsus est loqui: 'Age, quando sum condemnatus, quo jure Deus novit, ad exonerandam conscientiam volo liberius eloqui quod sentio de vestra constitutione. Primum illud dico, me septem annis intendisse animum studiumque meum in istam causam, verum hactenus in nullo doctorum ab ecclesia probatorum reperi scriptum, quod lai-

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cus, aut ut vocant, secularis, possit aut debeat esse caput status spiritualis aut ecclesiastici.' Hic cancellarius interrumpens Mori sermonem, Domine More, inquit, itane tu vis haberi sapientior, meliorisque conscientiæ omnibus episcopis, tota nobilitate, toto denique regno? Ad quæ Morus: Domine, inquit, Cancellarie, pro uno episcopo quem habes tuæ opinionis, ego sanctos et orthodoxos viros habeo plures centum, mecum sentientes, et pro unico vestro concilio, quod tale sit Deus novit, pro me habeo omnia concilia generalia annis abhinc mille celebrata: et pro uno regno, habeo Franciam cæteraque orbis christiani regna omnia. Hic Dux Nortfolcii interpellans: Nunc More, inquit, perspicuè liquet tua malevolentia.

Ad quæ Morus: *My Lord*, (sic Angli compellant insigni dignitate præstantes) ut hoc loquar non incitat malevolentia, sed cogit necessitas ad exonerandam conscientiam meam, teste Deo, qui solus scrutatur corda hominum. Præterea dico et illud, constitutionem vestram esse perperam factam, eo quòd vos professi estis, et jurejurando vosmetipsos obstrinxistis, nihil unquam molituros adversus sanctam ecclesiam, quæ per universam ditionem christianam unica est, integra et individua, neque vos soli ullam habetis auctoritatem citra aliorum christianorum consensum condendi legem, aut instituendi concilium adversus unionem et concordiam christianitatis. Nec me fugit, quamobrem à vobis condemnatus sim, videlicet ob id, quod nunquam voluerim assentire in negotio novi matrimonii regis. Confido autem de divina bonitate ac misericordia, fore ut quemadmodum olim Paulus Stephanum persecutus est usque ad mortem, et tamen iidem nunc unanimes sunt in cœlo, ita nos qui nunc discordes sumus in hoc mundo, in futuro seculo pariter simus concordes, et perfecta charitate unanimes. Hac spe fretus precor Deum ut vos servet unà cum rege, eique dare dignetur bonos consultores!

His ita peractis, Thomas Morus reductus est in Turrim. Hic obiter accidit spectaculum ipsa condemnatione miserabilius. Margareta filiarum Mori natu maxima, mulier præter eximiam formæ venustatem cum summa dignitate conjunctam, judicio, ingenio, moribus et eruditione patris simillima, per mediam populi turbam, perque satellitum arma semet injecit, et ad parentem penetravit. Quum et mulier esset, et natura cumprimis verecunda, tamen et metum et pudorem omnem excusserat impotens animi dolor, cùm audisset patrem in

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curia morti addictum esse. Hoc accidit priusquam Morus arcis portam ingrederetur. Ibi in carissimi parentis collum irruens, arctissimo complexu aliquandiu tenuit eum. Cæterùm ne verbum quidem interim potuit proloqui. Curæ, inquit tragicus, leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent. Movit stipatores, tametsi duros, hoc spectaculum. Horum itaque permissu Morus his verbis consolatus est filiam : *Margareta, patienter feras, nec te discrucies amplius; sic est voluntas Dei; jampridem nosti secreta cordis mei :* simulque dedit osculum ex consuetudine gentis, si quem dimittunt. At illa cùm digressa esset ad decem vel duodecim passus, denuò recurrit, et amplexa parentem rursus inhæsit collo illius, sed elinguis præ doloris magnitudine. Cui pater nihil loquutus est, tantum erumpebant lacrymæ, vultu tamen à constantia nihil dimoto. Nec aliud supremis verbis mandavit, quàm ut Deum pro anima patris deprecaretur. Ad hoc pietatis certamen plurimis è populari turba lacrymæ excidere. Erant et inter satellites, ferum et immite genus hominum, qui lacrymas tenere non potuerunt. Nec mirum, quum pietatis affectus adeò valida res sit, ut immitissimas etiam feras moveat. Hic apud se quisque reputet quàm valido ariete tum pulsatum sit Thomæ Mori pectus. Erat enim erga suos omnes adeò φιλόστοργος, ut non alius magis : sed eam filiam ut erat eximiis prædita dotibus, ita diligebat impensius. Morum fortiter excepisse sententiam mortis, aut etiam carnificis securim, minus admirandum existimo, quàm pietatem erga suos potuisse vincere. Nihil enim addubito, quin hic doloris gladius crudelius vulneravit Mori præcordia, quàm illa carnificis securis, quæ collum amputavit.

Die Mercurii sequente, hoc est septimo die Julii, productus est in planiciem, quæ est ante arcem. Mos est illic ut afficiendi supplicio, de ponte plebem alloquantur. At Morus paucissimis verbis est usus, tantum orans qui aderant, ut pro ipso Deum orarent in hoc mundo, se vicissim in altero mundo precaturum pro ipsis. Mox hortabatur atque instanter rogabat, orarent Deum pro rege, ut illi dignaretur impertire bonum consilium, contestans se mori fidelem ac bonum regis ministrum, ac Dei inprimis. Hæc loquutus promptè constantique vultu flexis genibus cervicem posuit securim excepturus, non sine gravi multorum gemitu. Erat enim bonis omnibus carissimus.

Quæ hactenus narravi, ferè continebantur in scheda apud Parisios jactata,

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ac per manus hominum volitante. Quisquis autem scripsit, videtur actis interfuisse. Quæ deinceps referam, partim ex amicorum literis, partim è rumoribus accepi. Paucis antè diebus, h. e. XV. Cal. Julias Joannes Fischerus, episcopus Roffensis, qui tum vitæ sanctimonia atque austeritate, tum administrandis sacramentis, tum assiduitate docendi voce simul et scriptis, denique mira liberalitate in egenos, benignitate in studiosos, verum agebat episcopum, ex arce dicta in qua captivus tenebatur, productus est, et ad curiam, quæ ut antè dixi, Westmonasterio proxima est, frequenti satellitum armatorum stipatu perductus est, partim navigio, partim equo, ob corpusculi debilitatem, quam præter ætatem auxerat carceris incommoditas; licet ipse valetudinem suam semper et jejuniis et vigiliis et studiis et laboribus ac lacrymis vehementer attenuasset. Ille verò tametsi non ignoraret ejus cognitionis exitum, nihil tamen perturbatus est, sed placido, ac propè etiam ad hilaritatem composito vultu ad tribunal evocantibus paruit. Ibi juxta morem ejus regionis quem antea descripsi, sententia capitali damnatus est, supplicium daturus, simulatque regi visum esset. Hoc adjectum suspicor, si fortè spe veniæ ac supplicii metu posset à sententia deduci. Mortis genus erat et fædum et horribile, quo tamen fuerant affecti Cartusiani aliquot, quos aiunt fuisse quindecim: quod ut credam vix possum adduci. Cartusianis adjunctus est Reginaldus monachus Brigittensis, vir angelico vultu et angelico spiritu, sanique judicii: quod ex illius colloquio comperi, quum in comitatu Cardinalis Campegii versarer in Anglia. Nam Cartusianorum novi neminem. Aiunt ex his quosdam fuisse per viam tractos, dein suspensos laqueo, ac spirantibus etiamnum exsecta intestina: quosdam etiam exustos igni, sed omnium incredibilem fuisse constantiam. Solet rumor rebus tristibus aliquid addere. At si hic verus est, videtur hoc esse consilium eorum qui regio obsecundant animo, ut immanitate suppliciorum cæteros absterreant. Nam facile divinabant, institutum plurimis improbatum iri, præsertim ecclesiasticis, et religionis studio deditis. Sed ad Roffensem episcopum redeo.

Is accepta tam horrendæ mortis sententia, quum satellitibus stipatus reduceretur in arcem, ut ad ostium ventum est, versus ad satellites hilari placidoque vultu, Plurimam, inquit, optimi viri, vobis habeo gratiam pro officio, quo me euntem et redeuntem deduxistis. Dixisses hominem ex hilari suavique redire convivio, adeò et color erat jucundior, et ipse toto corporis gestu, quatenus

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per gravitatem licuit, lætitiam quandam præ se ferebat, ut nemini non esset perspicuum, sanctissimum virum, ceu jam portui vicinum, toto pectore ad illam beatam tranquillitatem aspirare. Nec diu dilata est mors. Ad decimum Cal. Julii productus in planiciem, quam Angli vulgò dicunt turris collem, vultu non solum constanti, verum etiam alacri, paucis alloquutus est populum. Primum regi regnoque bene precatus est. Mox ardenti magis quàm prolixa precatione seipsum Dei misericordiæ commendavit: simulque procumbens in genua, gracili et exhausta cervice securim excepit. Neque enim apud Anglos carnifices gladio cervicem incidunt, sed damnato in truncum ad id apparatum inclinanti, securi caput amputant. Quanto cum animi dolore viderint hoc spectaculum quibus religio pietasque cordi est, et qui Christi spiritum in pastore operantem experti fuerant, facile quivis ex sese poterit æstimare. Cæterum quòd mitiore pœna affectus est, quàm minabatur judicum sententia, sunt qui in causa fuisse putent, quod metuerint, ne senex et exhausto corpusculo, si per viam tam longam rheda traheave tractus fuisset, sponte expiraret. Ego suspicor, ob hoc mortis genus atrocius denuntiatum, ut immanitate supplicii territus mutaret sententiam. Nec desunt qui prædicant, ob hoc ipsum acceleratam mortem, quòd Romanus pontifex Paulus tertius episcopum Roffensem ob insignem doctrinam ac pietatem in cardinalium ordinem allegisset. Ex amicorum literis cognovi, in Germania inferiore sparsum rumorem, quum episcopi Roffensis caput esset in ponte Londoniensi de more expositum, non solum non emarcuisse, verum etiam magis efflоruisse, vivoque factum similius, ut multi crederent fore, ut etiam loqui inciperet: quod in quibusdam martyribus factum legimus. Ea res, seu fama, quum vulgò increbuisset, sublatum est atque abditum. Populus enim credulus sæpe levi quapiam occasione turbas ingentes excitat. At veriti ne idem eveniret in capite Mori, priusquam exponeretur, aqua ferventi decoctum est, quo plus haberet horroris. Hæc aliaque multa his similia perscribuntur è Flandria Britannis viciniore: penes alios sit fides. Utinam huc pervenissent acta Roffensis, quemadmodum acta Mori pervenerunt. Ex Mori responsis facile liquet, illum destinasse mori citius, quàm suæ sententiæ canere palinodiam. Quo animo videntur omnes fuisse qui ante Morum extincti sunt.

Morum ac Roffensem et illud movit, opinor, quòd qui bene natos, lautè educatos, in honore habitos, in carcere detinet, non dat vitam, sed longiorem

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et acerbiorem mortem. Ego si regi fuissem in consilio, pro mea stultitia conatus fuissem illi persuadere, ut pro sua solita clementia cæterisque virtutibus, per quas nomen ipsius hactenus erat apud omnes nationes gratiosum et amabile, ab illis Britanniæ luminibus, totique orbi notis abstineret, aut certè pœna mitiore contentus esset. Rursus, si qui perierunt me adhibuissent in consilium, suasissem, ne se irruenti procellæ palam opponerent. Violenta res ira regum, cui si incommodè resistas, graviores excitat tumultus. Equi feroces, quemadmodum et tonitrua, non vi sed popysmate leniuntur. Et nautæ non pugnant adversus impotentem tempestatem, sed vel quiete vel obliquis cursibus utentes expectant cœlum commodius. Multis rebus medetur tempus, quas nulla vi possis emendare. Res humanæ semper quidem fluctuant, sed quoties incidit insignis aut fatalis rerum mutatio, multi periclitantur qui non cedunt turbini. Veluti quum Julius Cæsar aperiret januam tyrannidi, et triumviri junctis copiis imperium orbis occuparent, laudatissimi quique viri perierunt, quorum erat et M. Tullius. Qui monarchis serviunt, iis quædam dissimulanda sunt, ut si non queant obtinere quod judicaverunt optimum, saltem aliqua ex parte moderentur principum affectus. Dixerit aliquis, pro veritate mortem oppetendam. At non pro quavis veritate. Si tyrannus jubeat, aut abjura Christum, aut pone cervicem : ponenda cervix. Sed aliud est silere, aliud abjurare. Si fas est te dissimulare christianum citra grave scandalum, multo magis licuisset hic esse tacitum.

Sed ineptè facio, qui de rebus tam arduis disputem, qui nunquam interfuerim monarcharum consiliis. Itaque de tota causa judicium aliis relinquo. Illud satis constat, eos viros si quid peccarint, nulla in regem malevolentia peccasse, sed simplici sinceraque conscientia errasse. Hoc sibi penitus persuaserant, hoc medullis infixum habebant, sanctum, pium, regi honorificum, regno salutare esse quod tuebantur. Argumento est, quod nullus illorum affectarit regnum, aut alteri asserere conatus sit, nec ullam molitus sit seditionem, aut ullas contraxerit copias, ac ne verbum quidem excidit odium conspirationemve resipiens. Silere cupiebant si licuisset, sed patienter ac placide mortem exceperunt, nihil aliud quam regi regnoque bene precantes. At in atrocibus etiam criminibus magnam culpæ partem excusat simplex ac pura conscientia, animusque non lædendi, sed bene merendi cupidus. Tum apud efferas etiam nationes frequenter eximiæ virtuti præstantique doctrinæ honos

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est habitus. Platoni apud Aeginetas juxta civitatis constitutionem capite plectendo, profuit philosophi cognomen. Diogenes impunè penetravit in castra Philippi regis Macedonum, ad quem pro exploratore adductus, libere exprobravit regi insaniam, quod non contentus suo regno, semet conjiceret in periculum ne perderet omnia. Non impune tantum, sed etiam cum munere dimissus est, non ob aliud nisi quod esset philosophus. Quemadmodum monarcharum in eruditos benignitas plurimum honesti nominis illis conciliat, ita durius tractati plurimum invidiæ conflant illis. De his præcipuè loquor, qui scriptis inclaruerunt apud omnes nationes, et quorum memoria videtur apud posteros futura gratiosa. Quis nunc non execratur Antonium, qui Ciceronem ferro peremit? Quis non detestatur Neronem, qui Senecam occiderit? Nec minimum gratiæ decessit Octavii Cæsaris nomini, quod Ovidium ad Getas relegarit.

Hæc nequaquam eo mihi dicuntur, ut regem christianum cum impiis principibus conferam, aut de negotio cujus circumstantias non novi pronuntiem, quod etiamsi periculum abesset, temerarium esset: sed ut ostendam quibus rationibus fuerim conaturus persuadere, ut rex parcendo viris pietatis et eruditionis commendatione jam immortalitati consecratis, suo quoque nomini consuleret. Plausibilis semper est præpotentum clementia: sed tum clarissimos fert applausus, quoties viris illustribus ac de republica bene meritis impenditur. Omne solum forti patria est: et exilium fortibus ac præclaris viris sæpe cessit feliciter. Mortis invidia gravis est. Quum rex Galliarum Ludovicus XII, regnum adeptus pararet divortium cum Lodovici regis XI, filia, Maria, ni fallor, nomine, res displicuit quibusdam bonis; ex quibus Johannes Standoch, et hujus discipulus Thomas, in concione nihil aliud dixerant, nisi Deum orandum esse ut regi inspiraret bonum consilium. Quæ apud populum dicuntur, ad seditionem spectant: et hi deliquerant adversus regis edictum. Rex tamen nihil aliud quàm vertere solum jussit, nec quicquam ademit facultatum: at idem negotio quod agebat confecto, revocabat eos. Hac moderatione rex ille et suo consuluit instituto, et gravem invidiam evitavit, quod uterque esset theologus, uterque sanctitatis opinione commendatus.

At Thomæ Mori mortem deplorant et ii, quorum instituto pro viribus adversabatur; tantus erat hominis in omnes candor, tanta comitas, tantaque

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benignitas. Quem ille vel mediocriter eruditum ab se dimisit indonatum ? Aut quis fuit tam alienus, de quo non studuerit bene mereri ? Multi non favent nisi suis, Galli Gallis, Germani Germanis, Scoti Scotis ; at ille in Hibernos, in Germanos, in Gallos, in Scythas et Indos amico fuit animo. Hæc naturæ benignitas sic Morum omnium animis penitus infixit, ut non secus ac parentem aut fratrem plorent extinctum. Ipse vidi multorum lacrymas, qui nec viderant Morum, nec ullo officio ab eo fuerant affecti : ac mihi quoque dum hæc scribo, nolenti ac repugnanti lacrymæ prosiliunt. Quomodo nunc affectum credimus Erasmum nostrum, cui cum Moro tam arcta fuit amicitia, ut prorsus, juxta Pythagoram, in duobus eadem esse videretur anima ? Equidem misere metuo, ne bonus ille senex suo Moro commoriatur, si tamen adhuc in vivis est. Sunt qui nos consolantur hoc argumento, quòd dicunt, non deplorandos esse, sed gratulandum potius iis, qui tali morte vitam finierunt. Est istud, fateor, non leve doloris lenimen : at ego Morum optarim incolumem, quum omnium studiosorum gratia, tum verò præcipuè familiæ causa, quam et numerosam et plane philosophicam reliquit : filium natu minimum jam maritum ac liberorum parentem, filias tres, et has nuptas ac liberorum matres, eruditas omnes, ac sub paterna disciplina ad christianam philosophiam pulchre institutas, uxorem fidelem, ac jam anum, ex qua tamen nullam prolem sustulit. Has omnes cum sponsis, nepotibus ac neptibus in unis ædibus alebat, tanta religione, tantaque concordia, quantam non temere reperias in collegiis monachorum ac virginum. Hic mihi cogita, vir optime, qui luctus, quæ lacrymæ, qui gemitus, qui dolores totam illam familiam conficiant. Quot egregias animas vulneravit illa securis, quæ Mori caput amputavit ? multi demirantes rogant, quid tanti sceleris commiserit vir semper habitus innocentissimis moribus ? Quibus vix habeo quod pro comperto respondeam, nisi quod partim conjicere licet ex articulis Moro objectis et illius responsione, partim ex amicorum literis ac fama vulgata discere datur.

Rex, ut omnibus notissimum est, aliquot annis moliebatur repudium cum regina Caroli Cæsaris matertera, Morus præsagiens quo res esset evasura, ultro deposuit cancellarii munus, alia quædam causatus, ne cogeretur ejus negotii exequutor esse, quod apud sese non probabat. Erat enim mentis tam religiosæ, ut propior esset superstitioni quam impietati. Sic cogitabat ; privato licebit quiescere : cancellario, qui os est regis, non licebit. Videbat fore, ut cogere-

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tur multos condemnare morte, quos judicabat optimos: ad hæc exitum tanti negotii incertum esse, ob ecclesiasticorum potentiam ac gentis illius solitam in reges ferociam. Tale si quid natum fuisset, prima victima fuisset cancellarius. At me si Morus in consilium adhibuisset, quum esset tam anxiè religiosa conscientia, dehortatus fuissem eum ne susciperet dignitatem. Vix enim fieri potest, ut qui in arduis principum functionibus versantur, in magnis pariter ac parvis justitiam ad unguem observent. Proinde mihi gratulantibus quod talem haberem amicum in tanto rerum fastigio collocatum, respondere soleo, me non prius illi de ejus dignitatis accessione gratulaturum quàm juberet ipse. Jam tum enim nescio quid sinistri præsagiebat animus. Nec regem arbitror latuisse, quam ob causam Morus deponeret magistratum, utcunque dissimulavit: quod Homerus indicat, monarchis esse proprium, offensionem in animo tegere, donec multo post tempore detur ulciscendi opportunitas.

Interim rex minis ac fulminibus Clementis *VII* factus irritatior, adjecit animum ad vetus illius regionis exemplum, ut regnum a jure pontificis Romani assereret, et utriusque status supremam potestatem sibi vindicaret. Cæterum quum sentiret, plurimorum animos ab hoc instituto abhorere, ne qua cooriretur seditio, promulgatum est edictum, ut quicunque non abjuraret Romani pontificis autoritatem, aut improbaret novum matrimonium, capitalis esset. Verum hoc edictum non est promulgatum, nisi Roffense et Moro jam ductis in custodiam. Roffensis semper plurimum tribuit sedi Romanæ, et adversus repudium libris etiam conscriptis pugnarat, sed tum quum adhuc integrum esset consulere. Morus scripsit nihil, sed pro officio quod gerebat, conabatur regis animum in eam inflectere sententiam, quam putabat et Deo gratam, et regi tutam, et regno salutarem.

Erat illi magna familiaritas cum episcopo Roffense; tum prædium quod habebat Morus non procul aberat a Richemonda. Ibi regio palatio vicina sunt duo monasteria vehementer opulenta, et quod majus est, bonæ disciplinæ, alterum Cartusianorum, alterum Brigittensium. Ab his facile crediderim sollicitatum Mori animum, ut ecclesiæ causam tueretur: at ipsum aliquid effutisse quod rebellionem saperet, nunquam sum crediturus, ut qui ex crebris colloquiis perspexerim admirabilem quandam hominis cautionem. Ecquidem vix alium

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Anglum comperi, qui tam medullitus amarit principem suum, aut magis ex animo bene vellet, quam ille.

Unde igitur hic tumultus? Violenta res est, conscientia magis metuens Deum offendere, quam mortem oppetere. Forte fefellit eum persuasio. At demiror si vir ille levibus argumentis adductus est, ut sic obfirmaret animum. Maluit ipse perpeti, quam in alios facere, quod necesse fuisset, si in suscepto munere perseverasset. Quin et reginæ veteris, singulari pietate fœminæ multos miseret, non tantum ob id, quod dudum tanta dignitate florens, nunc in eum statum redacta est, ut ob divortium nec eo frui possit quicum tam diu vixit, nec alteri nubere ob Clementis sententiam: verum etiam quod videt, non dubium quin cum summo animi dolore, ipsius causa tales viros trucidari. Hujus porro tragœdiæ quis sit futurus exitus, Deus novit. Illud in confesso est, per necem beati Thomæ Acrensis, plurimum et auctoritatis et opum accessisse statui ecclesiastico apud Anglos. Qui res mortalium suo imperscrutabili consilio moderatur, pro sua bonitate dignabitur hæc omnia vertere in suam gloriam. Tantum e scheda, rumoribus et amicorum literis, hactenus licuit cognoscere: si compertiora fuero nactus, tibi communicabo. Tu fac vicissim ut per te sciamus quid agat rex Sion cum suis prophetis, populoque retincto, de quibus hic mira feruntur, an vera nescio. Apud Lutetiam Parisiorum X. Cal. Augusti Ann. M.D.XXXV.

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CLARORUM ET DOCTORUM VIRORUM VARIA EPIGRAMMATA IN LAUDEM THOMÆ MORI.

MORI VIRTUTES DESCRIPTÆ PER T. STAPLETONUM.

Est virtutis amans, cui nulla scientia cordi est:
Sunt literis clari, quos virtus non tamen ornat:
Est qui utrumque tenet, tractare at publica nescit
Munera; sunt hæc qui feliciter omnia possunt.
Sed quibus infauste res tota domestica currit:
Invenias alium, cui sint hæc omnia, at idem est
Moribus insuavis, severus, durus, agrestis:
Hic sectatur opes, alius conquirit honores,
Et maculat multas hoc uno crimine laudes:
Et qui hæc cuncta tenet, vitio quoque purus ab omni,
Sed moriens latet, atque obscura morte quiescit.
Unus erat Morus, nulli (1) pietate secundus,
Ingenio, (2) literis clarus; qui (3) munera gessit
Maxima: qui (4) contemtor opum, (5) contemtor honorum,
(6) Familiam et proles rara virtute gubernat.
(7) Candidus et suavis, regi populoque jucundus.
(8) Martyrio illustris concludit cuncta beatus.
Virtutum fuit hæc encyclopædia Mori.

VARIA EJUS ERUDITIO: PER EUNDEM.

Vis scire in literis, quis, et quid esset
Thomas ille Morus, decus suorum?

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Orator fuit elegans, disertus :
Festivus fuit et poeta suavis.
Non Græcum secus ac Latina callens.
Nec callet modo ; sed tuetur illa,
Linguarum haud secus advocatus acer,
Quam legum fuerat Britannicarum.
Scribendæ historiæ artifex peritus.
Res gestæ satis hoc docent Richardi
Anglorum gravis et feri tyranni.
Quantus philosophus, docere possunt
Leges Utopiæ recens repertæ.
In sacris literis, patrumque libris
Quid Morus valuit, probant labores,
Quos contra hereticos domi forisque
Scribendo tulit : hos libris Latinis
(Sunt testes Pomeranus et Lutherus)
Illos vernaculis pie refutans.
Ingens è quibus edidit volumen,
Anglis fructiferum ; elegans volumen.
Nec vult dogmatibus vocare solis ;
Sed per quos pietas, salusque mentis
Augmentum capiat, dedit libellos :
Angli quos avide legunt libellos,
Nec quicquam utilius legi fatentur.
Qui pro dogmatibus legenda scripsit
Dat pro dogmatibus caput securi.
Hic major calamus, liberque major :
Hunc, hunc posteritas librum revolvat.

NOMINIS ΑΙΤΙΟΛΟΓΙΑ : PER EUNDEM.

More, nec es Maurus, quod vox sonat Anglica Mori,
Nec fatuus, quod vox attica, μωρὸς, habet.
Scilicet infausti correxit nominis omen
Et vigor et candor maximus ingenii.

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DE REGE HENRICO VIII, ROFFENSI ET MORO: EJUSDEM.

Cur bonus in prima florens, Henrice, juventa,
Impius in tenebris ultima fata trahis?
Nempe quia extinxti duo maxima lumina regni:
Roffensis Phœbus, Cynthia Morus erat.
Præfuit ille sacris; terrennis præfuit iste.
Extinctis pereunt sacra, profana simul.

JANI VITALIS, ITALI.

Dum Morus immeritæ submittit colla securi,
Et flent occasum pignora cara suum;
Imo ait, infandi vitam deflete tyranni:
Non moritur, facinus qui grave morte fugit.

JOHANNIS SECUNDI, HAGIENSIS.

Quis jacet hic truncus? cujus caput ense recisum est
Quæ natat in tetro sanguine canicies?
Hic est ille Thomas Morus. Sic facta rependunt
Tristia multa bonis, et bona multa malis.
Quæ circumsistunt divæ lugubre cadaver?
Diva tenax veri: sancta fides: Nemesis.
Quarum prima fuit causa et fuit altera mortis;
Ultrix injustæ tertia cædis erit.

ALIUD, EJUSDEM.

State viri. Forte hos cineres novisse juvabit.
Hunc tumulum Morus colla resectus habet.
Ille decus regni quondam et nunc dedecus Angli,
Quod tulerat talem, quod modo sustulerit.

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Illi ut salva foret pietas, pridem aula relicta est.
Salvo ut perderet vita relicta modo est.
Fide Thoma. Quantam nolles, vindicta paratur.
Regalesque tuis manibus inferiæ.

ALIUD, EJUSDEM.

Ad Styga cum Mori venisset flebilis umbra,
Pallidulum largo sparsa cruore caput ;
Portitor ingemuit, trux Cerberus ora repressit,
Persephone falsis immaduit lacrymis.
Et, quem rex letho infami damnarat adulter,
Absolvit Stygii judicis urna reum.
Illum rex Erebi, pro constanti probitate,
Addidit infernis judicibus socium :
Cædis ut authorem ; fuerit cum morte peremptus,
Addicat diris suppliciis meritum.
Virentem interea infestet torva umbra tyrannum
Semper, et ante oculos sanguinolenta volet.
Et vos Eumenides sparsis per colla colubris,
Illius ultrices tendite in ora faces.

EJUSDEM SECUNDI NÆNIA, IN MORTEM THOMÆ MORI.

Extinctum flemus crudeli funere Morum
Et regem immanem, veneremque cruore madentem,
Fortunæque vices, et læsæ pellicis iram.
Vos mihi pierides feralia carmina musæ
Dictate, et mecum vatem lugete peremtum,
Insignem cythara ; qui vos persæpe solebat
Vertice ab Aonio molli deducere versu.
Tuque adeo mihi, Calliope, quæ regia facta,
Et casus miserorum hominum cantare perita es,
Nec cædes exhorrescis memorare cruentas.

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Dextera ades. Tu vero erato, tu blanda Thalia,
Truncatum interea tumulo componite corpus,
Exequias celebrate, aspergite floribus urnam,
Et tumulo castos aspiret laurus odores,
Sacrum laurigeri vatis complexa sepulchrum.

Te quoque deflerem divûm venerande sacerdos,
Roffensis præsul populi, qui dura subisti
Fata prior, sancta pro relligione tuenda :
Sed vatem canimus vates ; tua maxima facta
Vulgabunt alii, et præclara volumina condent,
Attollentque tuum super aurea sidera nomen.

Tempus erat, mundi cum jam adventante ruina,
Occideret senio justum, et labefacta deorum
Relligio caderet, tot sustentata per annos.
Mortalesque fidem tota de mente fugassent ;
At dolus, et fastus, cumque impietate libido.
Ambitioque, et livor edax, fulvi et sitis auri,
Grassantes late, qua sol sublimis utrumque
Aspicit oceanum, geminas quaque aspicit arctos,
Miscebantque profana sacris, et sacra profanis.
Tum furiæ ex imis erebi emersere tenebris,
Sanguineas capitum quatientes undique cristas,
Armatæ facibus, phlegetonteoque veneno.
Nec mora, cœruleos subito petiere Britannos,
Fatorum gnaræ, tempus namque adfore norant,
Cum rex Henricus despreto conjugis usu,
In vetitos rueret thalamos famosus adulter,
Atque alias tædas, alios celebrans Hymenæos,
Mentis inops, regni indotatam in parte locaret,
Vilem animam, et nullo majorum stemmate fultam :
At regina prior, thalamis ejecta maritis,
Ingratum in lachrymis et luctu duceret ævum ;
Illa quidem magni de sanguine Ferdinandi,

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Primus qui Mauros regnis exegit avitis,
Quo nunquam Hesperia regnasset major in ora,
Ni sua progenies majori numine, Cæsar,
Mundi sceptra tenens, titulos superasset avorum.

At postquam diræ subierunt regia tecta
Eumenides, tremuit tellus, sic conscius æther
Horruit, Oceanus pater, et circumflua Tethys
Imis delituere vadis. Rex ipse, maritus
Jam novus, inprimis et adhuc complexibus hærens,
Extimuit facti pœnas, iramque deorum.
Illæ autem ut videre novos celebrari Hymenæos,
Gaudebant pariter Diræ, pariterque dolebant:
Crimine gaudebant, sed non authoribus ipsis.
Patratum doluere nefas, nimiumque potentem
Et venerem, et volucris tela indignantur Amoris.
Ergo aliud meditantur opus, dirumque frementes,
Pellicis insinuant atrum in præcordia virus,
Et stolido regi eripiunt mentemque animumque.

Ille scelus firmare suum majoribus ausis
Enitens, sceleri scelus adjicit, et contemptis
Pontificis summi monitis, (quibus ille jubebat,
Ejiceret mœcham, thalamique in jura vocaret
Legitimam uxorem, solitoque ornaret honore)
Ipse sibi jus pontificis, nomenque sacratum,
Quam late sua regna patent, usurpat, et omnem
Sacrilegus veterem convellit relligionem;
Et gravius peccat, ut non peccasse putetur.

Egregia interea pellex quæ gaudia sentit?
In quorum jugulos miserum non armat amantem?
Præcipue, si quos probitas suspecta, et honesti
Prodit amor; More infelix, sic te tua virtus

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Perdidit? ô ævi scelus atque infamia nostri.
Tu regni decus, et regi carissimus idem
Consultor fueras, nec judex æquior alter
Jura dabat, qua pensant heu mercede laborem
Fata tibi? poteras illæsam ducere vitam,
Sed minus esse probus. Vitæ quam dura relicta
Conditio fuit insonti? si vera professus,
Fatalem exciperet cana cervice securim:
Sin vitam falsa vellet ratione tueri,
Applaudens stupris, infandæque ambitioni,
Pollueret moresque suos, vitamque priorem,
Offensamque hominis, mutaret numinis ira.

Ille autem justique tenax, cultorque deorum,
Sponte sua ferro caput obtulit, et procumbens
Purpureum sacro fudit de pectore rivum.

Fortunate senex animi, tibi regia cœli
Tota patet, tibi rex superûm victricia serta
Porrigit ipse manu, magno applaudente senatu
Cœlicolûm, et volucres recinunt pœana ministri,
Omnes intonsi, niveis in vestibus omnes;
Quales ad vitreum meandri flumen olores
Mille volant, plaudunteque alis, et dulce canentes
Cæruleum nitidis prætexunt æthera pennis.

Quis tibi tum sensus, mœstissima Margaretta,
Nata patris miseri? quanto tua lumina fletu
Undabant! quantos, eheu, de pectore anhelo
Ducebas gemitus, corpus cum flebile patris
Exanimum aspiceres indigna cæde peremti!
Nam te credibile est, quanquam patris inclyta facta
Æternam tibi conciliant famamque decusque,
Non potuisse oculos compescere tempore in illo,

Quin durum fleres casum, patrisque cruorem
Ablueres lacrymis, et circumfusa cadaver
Oscula pallidulo ferres moribunda parenti.
Tu tamen has aufer tenero de pectore curas,
Nec lacrymis corrumpe tuos, pulcherrima, vultus.
Sic te Phœbus amet, sic, ô doctissima virgo,
Adjiciat numero te Calliopeia sororum.

Interea truncum jacet et sine nomine corpus,
Spectaculum populo dirum : at polluta cruore
Canicies, ne quid sceleris restaret inausum,
Neu tantos ætas nesciret sera furores,
Præfixa infami spectanda exponitur hasta :
Deformata tamen primum ferventibus undis,
Duceret informes donec cutis aspera rugas,
Labraque in horrendos traherentur lurida rictus :
Ne, quod Roffensi acciderat, suffusa rubore
Mortua vitalem præferrent ora calorem :
Turbarentque pium rursus miracula vulgus.

Hocne tuæ veneri, rex ô inceste, tropæum
Erigis ? et mollem placari sanguine divam
Posse putas ? iras in te convertet acerbas
Ipsa Venus, vindexque tuos subvertet amores :
Atque aliis iterum, atque aliis tua pectora flammis
Uret, ut infamis veniant tibi tædia vitæ.
Tunc, memor indignæ cædis, tua noxia facta
Flebis, et invisa sumes de pellice pœnas.

Pellæus juvenis furiis agitatus, et ira
Incandens, multoque animum inflammatus Iaccho,
Dilectum ante alios inter convivia Clitum
Transfodit ferro, et resparsit sanguine mensas :
At postquam furor ille animi discussus, et omnis
Consumptus vini vapor est, mentemque recepit,

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Ipse manus inferre sibi, sociumque per umbras
Velle sequi, et miseros incassum fundere questus.
Tresque adeo mœstus soles, totidem quoque noctes
Exegit lacrymans, luctu confusus acerbo
Ne quicquam ; neque enim luctu revocantur acerbo
Pallentes animæ, quas per vada languida vexit
Portitor, atque avido trajectos tradidit orco.
Tu quoque dilectum frustra plorabis amicum,
Cum tibi discusso mens pura redibit amore.
Interea horrifica rumpet tua somnia forma
Umbra viri, multoque caput fœdata cruore,
Quo te cunque feres dira occursabit imago,
Supplicium sævis exposcens horrida factis.
Namque tuis donec regnis exutus, et exul,
Extremam implorabis opem rerum omnium egenus,
Morus inultus erit. Nulla est violentia longa :
O indictæque moram pœna graviore rependunt
Numina, justitiam quorum haud effugerit ullus.

At nos æternum tua tristia funera, More,
Insolabiliter deflebimus ; ô bone vates,
Tu mortem sancta pro relligione subisti
Crudelem. Tibi divinos pro talibus ausis
Mortales debent cultus, tibi templa, tibi aras.
Æternum, venerande senex, salveque, valeque,
Seu colis Elysium, seu cœli lucida templa ;
Accipe et hunc nostrum non dura fronte laborem.

JACOBI EXERICHI, HISPANI.

Henricus Morum gladio jugulavit iniquo ;
Tam dignum vita, quam fuit ipse nece.
Mortuus ille tamen vivet per secula cuncta,
Post mortem virtus vivere sola facit.

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JACOBI LATOMI, BELGÆ.

Quid tibi cum Moro, tali indignissima cive
Anglia? quid pergis dicere inepta tuum?
Tu ferro insontem, nec simplice morte, Catonem
Persequeris: tuto nec licet esse pium.
Proinde sile. Nam quo maculam tibi demeret istam,
Ipse sibi patriam condidit Utopiam.

GENTIANI HERVETI, AURELIANENSIS.

Quod capiti quondam Ciceronis rostra fuere,
Hoc est pons capiti, More diserte, tuo.
Ducentes Angli suspiria pectore dicunt:
Doctior et melior nullus in orbe fuit.

JO. VULTEI, RHEMENSIS. EX LIB. II. EPIGRAMMATUM.

Hic situs est Thomas Morus, tuus, Anglia, vates,
Turba Poetarum quem cecidisse gemit.
Dum regum docte metuendos admonet enses,
Illum carnificis rex jubet ense mori.
Illum amor et charites deflent, deflentque Camœnæ:
Nec damnum credit, qui sapit, esse leve.
Gallia quid possit, testisque Britannia; testis
Italia, et semper Græcia testis erit.

MAXIMILIANI WIGNACURTII, ATREBATIS.

Quæ fuit integritas, quæ vis, quæ copia fandi,
Quæ mens, More, tibi, sat tua scripta docent.
Qui Christi fuerit transfixum pectus amore,
Tradita testantur sat tua membra neci.

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Scilicet ut miris vixisti dotibus auctus,
Te decuit miro pectore, More, mori.
Vita tibi fuerat felix; felicior at mors,
Æterno vitam munere quæ peperit.
Ordo tuus per te micat uno lumine: sed sunt
Instar multorum lumina multa virûm.

JOANNIS WHITE, EPISC. VINTONIENSIS, IN DIACOSIO MARTYRION.

Quin etiam partes vulgato codice nostras
Propugnat scriptor maximus Utopiæ.
Fessus ad authoris melius te scripta remitto;
Rarus in orbe liber; nec tamen Utopiæ est.
Illius similes, imo multo meliores
Invenies libros, lector; at Utopiæ.
Et Mori similes, imo multo meliores
Scriptores videas, lector; at Utopiæ.

ALANI COPI, LONDINENSIS.

Quis vivente velit Thoma non vivere Moro?
Quis Moro nolit sic moriente mori?

ALIUD, EJUSDEM.

Mortuus an Morus, qui sic in mortis agone
Vixerat, ut mors sit victa coacta mori?
Imo piis morum meritis nunc vivit et orbi.
Et pura mentis relligione Deo.

JOANNIS FOULERI, BRISTOLIENSIS, IN MORI EFFIGIEM.

Effigiem quamcunque tui sic fingimus; at non
Tam facile est mores fingere, More, tuos.

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Quam vellem pictor mihi tam perfectus adesset,
Pingere qui vere posset utramque simul.
Tum quoque qui vitam totam moresque referret,
Ille magis multo doctus Appelle foret.

HENRICI HOLLANDI, VIGORNIENSIS.

Ergo quid ? ad nostros siculi venere tyranni ?
An terris nostris Africa monstra dedit ?
Num furit hic Gotthus, dum Symmachus atque Joannes
Amittunt carum morte furente caput !
Dum jacet Albinus, dumque urbe Boëtius alma
Expulsus Ticini tristia fata gemit ?
Sævit Alexander Magnus ? Clitumque fidelem
Enecat ? et vitam Parmenionis habet ?
An Nero sanguineus nostris dominatur in oris,
At que tibi vitam, Senneca docte, rapit ?
Hoc facit Henricus quod tunc Nero pessimus egit,
Dum te, More, necat, dum tua colla secat.
Senneca morte perit, quia vult Nero ; tu quoque More,
Dum vult Henricus, spicula mortis habes.
Arbitrium pro lege fuit, quod Senneca luxit ;
Arbitrium, quod te, More, perire facit.
Ut non est mirum, si sic Nero tollat amicum,
Qui matrem fato sustulit ante suam ;
Sic non est mirum, si rex te, More, necaret,
Qui ferus in matrem sæviit ante suam.
Non mirum est, aliis si vipera sæva noceret,
Cum propriæ matri vipera sæva nocet.
Henrici mater sancta est ecclesia Christi,
Hanc prius afflixit, quam tibi, More, nocet.
Et quia communem nolles pessundare matrem,
Fata sub immiti rege cruenta subis.
Quod genus hoc monstri ? cur sic rex barbare, frendis ?
An, quia vult matri parcere, Morus obit ?

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Non licet ingenuis natis defendere matrem ?
An scelus est veram non violare fidem ?
Scilicet Henrico placuit proportio prava :
Non parcit membro, dum premit ille caput.
Qui graviora patrat, non ille minora timebit,
Et scelus audaces ad mala plura facit.
Culpa trahit culpam : comitatur abyssus abyssum :
Pœna est peccati pessima culpa sequens.
Cum rex legitimæ fecit divortia sponsæ,
Venit et ad thalamos Anna Bolena suos ;
Cum rex Volsæum rerum de cardine movit,
Fecit et afflicta sorte perire virum ;
Cum rex schisma novum deformi crimine fecit,
Sedis apostolicæ debita jura negans ;
Cum rex pontificem præscripsit, jusque papale,
Non passus libros nomen habere papæ ;
Cum rex in sacris voluit caput esse supremum,
Assumsitque sibi pontificale decus ;
Cum rex lege nova sacratas diruit ædes,
Solvit et è claustris quos pia vota ligant ;
Cum rex divorum spolians opulenta sepulchra,
Lusit imaginibus, diva Maria, tuis ;
Cum rex damnavit clerum de crimine falso,
Presbyteros mulctans pontificesque suos ;
Cum rex omne malum fecit : tunc, More, necaris :
Horrebas oculis tanta videre mala.
Virtus sic Moro placuit, quod vivere nollet,
Si non virtuti vivere posse detur.
Dum pietas floret, floret quoque Morus ; at illa
Quam primum cœpit spreta jacere, jacet.
Rex pius in summis hunc pro pietate locavit,
Impius afflictum pro pietate necat.
Moro vita fides. Nam dum manet illa, manebat,
Stante fide stabat : qua pereunte perit.
Vita sibi pietas : pietate cadente cadebat,

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Quam pius est Morus pro pietate cadens!
O rex debueras insigni parcere Moro,
Rara avis est Morus sic super astra volans.
O rex si multos homines tua sceptra regebant,
At multos Moros non tua sceptra regunt.
Millibus è multis vix Morus cernitur unus,
Tam doctus, prudens, tam bonus atque pius.
Quanta labe tuum regnum populumque notasti,
Quum ferit insontem barbara plaga Morum?
Quis tibi persuasit tam clarum tollere fidus,
Quæ mens, quæ ratio, consiliumque fuit?
Quæ tua relligio parili sic jure necare
Igne Lutheranos, Catholicosque cruce?
Hoc liber ille tuus promiserat ante Leoni?
Hoc titulus, regno quem dedit ille tuo?
Defendisne fidem veros tollendo fideles?
Custodem legum legibus ipse necas?
Justitiamne colis justos feriendo securi?
Judiciumne facis judicis ora premens?
Consilium curas, et consiliarius iste,
Maximus absque ullo crimine morte perit?
Incidis nervos, ut corpus fortius esset?
Extinguis lumen, clarius ut videas?
Ut sit perfectum, scindis de corpore membrum?
Evulsis oculis cernere frontem cupis?
Ecquis arare solet terram non usus aratro?
Aut sulcare forum, sed sine nave, fretum?
Et tamen ista facis, dum Morum funere tollis,
Quem nullus sana tollere mente velit.
Sed frustra asperas tenebras offundere Moro.
Morus ubique volat docta per ora virûm.
Fortior Henrico Stapletonus: penna securi:
Illa mori fecit; vivere penna facit.

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ALIUD, EJUSDEM.

Quæris, Aristides cur pulsus ab urbe fugatur?
Altera non causa est, quam quia justus erat.
Quæris, cur Socrates truculenta venena bibebat?
Id fuit in causa, vir fuit ille bonus.
Quæris, cur magnus fuit ille Boëtius exul?
Nempe quod ille bonus, veriloquusque fuit.
Quæris, cur Morus submittit colla securi?
In promtu ratio est: optimus ille fuit.

ALIUD, EJUSDEM.

Quando tuam mortem recolo, celeberrime More,
Tunc venit in mentem Tullius ille meam.
Ille fori lumen, facundo clarus ab ore;
Tuque fori lumen, tuque disertus eras.
Ille pater patriæ, patrum decus atque senatus;
Tuque pater patriæ, tuque corona patrum.
Dum furit Antonius, fatis occiditur ille;
Dum furit Henricus, tu quoque fata subis.
Dum cadit ille, sua cum lingua Fulvia ludit;
Dum cadis ipse, tua morte Bolena canit.
Dum perit ille, caput rostris affigitur illis,
In quibus hic casus dixerat ante suos;
Dum peris ipse, tui capitis damnaris in aula,
In qua pro regno dicere jura soles.
In multis ambo similes, par laus manet ambos;
Dispar at in multis gloria, dispar honor.
Dicitur ut Cicero Romanos vincere scripto,
Morus sic Anglos puriloquente stylo.
Plurima scribebat Cicero, sic plurima Morus,
Plura tamen Mori quam Ciceronis erant.

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In multis vicit Ciceronem Morus : in ipso
Vicit subjecto materiaque libri.
Vicit in ingenio : quis par in acumine Moro ?
Vicit doctrina, judicioque gravi.
Vicit honore loci ; nam cancellarius iste
Uno anni unius consule major erat.
Vicit in ardenti veræ pietatis amore :
Vicit et in mortis nobilitate suæ.
Morus erat vates festivo carmine ludens,
Insignique potens arte poeta fuit.
Morus erat jurisprudens, vix major in orbe :
Philosophus summus, si quis in orbe fuit.
Morus erat custos legum, princepsque senatus,
Supremus judex, consiliique caput.
Nec latuit Morum divini pagina verbi,
Sic ferit hæreticos : sic tegit ille fidem.
Morus erat speculum vitæ, fideique patronus,
Insignis : martyr denique Morus erat.
Tindallus, Trithus, Barnesius atque Lutherus
A Mori calamo vulnera magna ferunt.
Non sat habet scriptis tales confundere pestes,
Sed pia confirmant sanguine scripta suo.
Plura quid hic dicam ? vix hæc bene singula dixi,
Vincor ab ingenio, More diserte, tuo.
Londinense decus, decus Oxoniense fuisti :
Urbs fuit illa parens, ista magistra fuit.
Tu decus Angligenûm, regalis tu decus aulæ,
Tu decus Europæ, tu decus orbis eras.
Tu monstrum ingenii : miracula sunt tua dicta,
Deliciæ juvenum, deliciæque senum :
Obruor ingenti magnarum pondere rerum :
Laus Mori nostro carmine major erit.
Qui minor est Moro, non novit pingere Morum :
Hoc si quis poterit, tu Stapletone, facis.

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T. STAPLETONI EPIGRAMMA AD EFFIGIEM MORI.

Talis erat Morus quum causas dixit in urbe :
Talis quum populi jura tuetur, erat.
Talis erat pleno quum fecit verba senatu,
Orator populi lingua decusque sui.
Talis erat ludens epigrammata, seria scribens,
Talis quum doctam scriberet Utopiam.
Talis in hæreticos quum docta volumina format,
Dum sacra defendit dogmata, talis erat.
Talis erat Gallis et Belgis fœdera pangens,
Legati fungens munere talis erat.
Talis erat torquatus eques, prudensque senator,
Pertractans regni scrinia, talis erat.
Talis erat tibi quum factus Lancastria judex
Ducatus tenuit jura suprema tui.
Quum cancellarius Britannica sceptra teneret,
Primo post regem munere, talis erat.
Talis erat Morus, quum tetro carcere clausus
Dogmate pro sacro vincula longa tulit.
Talis erat diræ submittens colla securi.
At nunc non talem regna beata vident.

N. GRUDII EPIGRAMMA.

MORUS LOQUITUR.

Ne lugete meo confusæ funere natæ ;
Ipse ego mutari non mea fata velim.
Truncum terra teget, si rex non abnuat urnam ;
Et mea jam terris nomina nota volant.
Libera mens superos repetet, neque serviet unquam,
In partem hanc quod agat nulla securis habet.

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Tu quoque spectator, tranquillum si cupis ævum
Exigere, et letho fortior esse tuo,
Qui tibi membra cadant nullo in discrimine pone ;
Quum sint naturæ lege caduca suæ.

J. PALUDANI RHETORIS LOVANIENSIS IN INSULAM UTOPIANAM EPIGRAMMA.

Fortes Roma dedit, dedit et laudata disertos
Græcia, frugales inclyta Sparta dedit :
Massilia integros dedit, at Germania duros,
Comes ac lepidos Attica terra dedit ;
Gallia clara pios, quondam dedit Africa cautos,
Munificos olim terra Britanna dedit :
Virtutum ex aliis aliarum exempla petuntur
Gentibus, et quod huic desit huic superat.
Una semel totam summam totius honesti
Insula terrigenis Utopiana dedit.

GERARDI NOVIOMAGI EPIGRAMMA.

Dulcia, lector, amas ? sunt hic dulcissima quæque
Utile si queris, nil legis utilius.
Sive utrumque voles, utroque hæc insula abundat,
Quo linguam exornes, quo doceas animum.
Hic fontes aperit, recti pravique disertus
Morus, Londini gloria prima suæ.

CORN. GRAPHÆUS AD LECTOREM.

Vis nova monstra, novo dudum nunc orbe reperto ?
Vivendi varia vis ratione modos ?

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Vis qui virtutum fontes? vis unde malorum
Principia? et quantum in rebus inane latet?
Hæc lege, quæ vario Morus dedit ille colore,
Morus, Londinæ nobilitatis honos.

HEXASTICHON ANEMOLII POETÆ LAUREATI, HYTHLODÆI EX SORORE NEPOTIS, IN INSULAM UTOPIANAM.

Utopia priscis dicta, ob infrequentiam,
Nunc civitatis æmula Platonicæ,
Fortasse victrix, (nam quod illa litteris
Delineavit, hoc ego una præstiti
Viris et opibus, optimisque legibus)
Eutopia merito sum vocanda nomine.

EJUSDEM TETRASTICHON.

Utopus me dux ex non insula fecit insulam,
Una ego terrarum omnium absque philosophia
Civitatem philosophicam expressi mortalibus.
Libenter impertio mea, non gravatim accipio meliora.

C. GOURADI DISTICHON.

Morus amoris amor, morum quoque Morus amator
Utopiam scribens tradidit Eutopiam.

JO. LELANDI MORIADES.

Desine facundas nimium laudare diserti
Natas Hortensi maxima Roma tui.

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Candida tres charites nam Mori cura politi
Obscurant multis nomina vestra modis.
Non illis studium Milesia vellera dextra
Carpere, non facili ducere fila manu :
Sed juvat eloquii crebro monumenta Latini
Versare, et doctis pingere verba natis.
Nec minus authores Græcos evolvere, Homerum
Et quem dicendi gloria prima manet.
Ut nec Aristotelis dicam quo pectore libros
Scrutentur, sophiæ mystica dona deæ.
Turpe viris posthac erit ignorare Minervæ
Artes, grex adeo quas muliebris amet.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Mundell, Doig, and Stevenson, printers, Edinburgh.

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